

# Born to Win

## Revelation #28

by Ronald L. Dart

### Revelation 21

AKJV

<sup>9</sup> And there came to me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.

<sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Now, this great city is not like anything you and I might imagine. No artist has *ever* come close to capturing the image of this city. And, of course, anyone who has visited the old city of Jerusalem as it now is can dismiss that out of hand. One wonders how anyone could refer to Jerusalem as beautiful or "Jerusalem the golden" when one visits the city on the ground. But what's there now is not what was, and *certainly* not what will be.

Not even John, who saw this vision, could really do it justice. The vision is found in Revelation 21, and we're beginning along about verse 9. And this is a part of the final vision of John in the Book of Revelation. We have to remember that this is a vision, yet it was *very vivid* and *very real* to John. Also remember that no man had ever seen anything like this. All John can do is tell us what he *saw* in terms of what he had previously seen in his lifetime. I mean, after all, he had his language, he had his vocabulary, he had his imagery; that's all he had to work with. And what he was seeing...well, he must have felt *totally* inadequate to the task. But he continued. He says,

### Revelation 21

AKJV

<sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

<sup>11</sup> Having the glory of God: and her light was like to a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

<sup>12</sup> And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, [...]

Now, what would be the names written on the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem? Well, they were...

### Revelation 21

AKJV

<sup>12</sup> [...] the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

<sup>13</sup> On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

<sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Now, it strikes me (perhaps it strikes you the same way) as a little odd how often the twelve tribes of Israel come into play in a prophecy dealing with the *very end of time*. You would have thought that something so “Old Testament” would have long since faded from the scene and would no longer be relevant, but here they are. You have twelve gates; every gate has the name of one of the twelve tribes. You have twelve foundations; and the names of the apostles are on those twelve foundations. And Jesus said that the twelve apostles would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel in his kingdom [Matt. 19:28]. Well, I guess what we have to conclude is that, when all is said and done, God is not yet finished with the twelve tribes. Where are they? Who are they? How are they going to come back into play on this? Well, it’s beyond the scope of this broadcast, but drop me a line and I’ll tell you where you can get some information on it. Verse 15:

### Revelation 21

AKJV

<sup>15</sup> And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

<sup>16</sup> And the city lies foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Now, do you have any idea how long 12,000 furlongs is (or are, if we want to get our English right). Well, according to the New American Standard Bible it is 1500 miles—long...and wide...and high. 1500 miles is something like the distance between Houston and Los Angeles. It is that big, the city is, squared on the ground; and that is something like (if my math is right), two-and-a-quarter *million* square miles on the ground for this city. It’s *big*.

Now, Jesus told his disciples when he was preparing to leave this earth that he was going to prepare a place for them. In John 14, verse 1 he said this:

### John 14

AKJV

<sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me.

<sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Now, other translations say, “In my Father’s house are many rooms” or “many offices” or “many places”; and he says, “I’m going to prepare a place *for you*, and I’m going to come back.” Come back where? Here. “That where I am...”—and when he comes back, where will he be? Here. “So that where I am you may be also.” *Here*. And John gives us a vision, not so much of our going off to heaven someplace, but of a holy Jerusalem (which is something *like* what we imagine heaven to be) coming *here* with Christ. And so he says, “I am preparing *in this place* a place for you.”

Now, how many places do you suppose he could prepare in a city like this? Well, my office suite is about 1700 square feet, but that would be way too small for a Son of God. Supposing that God gave each of us, what shall we say, three acres; that would leave room on the ground floor of this holy Jerusalem (once it’s come back to the earth and been planted here) for something in the neighborhood of 500 million of us—on the ground floor alone. Now, that’s plenty of room, I’d say; but you go up about half a mile, you put in another floor, and the number of places prepared runs to something like *one billion*. But remember, this city is *1500 miles high*. We’ve still got 1499-and-a-half miles to go *up*. Now, they tell us this (I don’t think you have to be a rocket scientist to figure it out): that all the

Christians who have ever lived are not going to use up much of this city, right? In fact, all the *people* who have ever lived on this planet would not use up much of this place. Well, what's the rest of it for?

I don't know, some of us have minds that run this way I suppose, but sometimes I lay awake at night contemplating the universe—the age of the universe, the scope of what God has built here—and I ponder what he is doing. They tell me that the universe is something like 15 *billion* years old. (God, of course, is rather older than that.) Now, there aren't enough zeros to count the number of stars in the universe, and nobody believes that the planets around our sun are the only planets. The astronomers have gotten so excited about finding the possibility around a star that they can see with a telescope somewhere that *might* have some planets or some planets being born. But they know that they're going to find planets. Their problem is that everything is so far away, and planets are so small, that you just can't see them. And we'll be old people and die, and generations can come and go on this planet, and we'd never develop the technology that is going to find planets in other galaxies. There is no chance. But when you look around you and you consider nature, and you consider the way things are, there just is no chance that we are all the planets there are in the universe, around our little sun. If there aren't enough zeros to count the number of stars in the universe, you're *surely* not going to be able to count the number of planets.

Now, consider what we know about God. If you've read your Bible, you surely have got a vision in your mind, an image in your mind, of what kind of a being—what kind of a *person*—that God is. Well, if you wanted to try somehow to describe God in *human* terms, it's fair to say, wouldn't you say, that God is “creative”. I was tempted to say “*highly* creative”, but highly is an inadequate adjective to describe “creative” where God is concerned. He is creative. He is energetic. The Bible tells us he never sleeps [Psalm 121]. It tells us he is wide awake all the time. It tells us that he has *really enormous* power. Translate that as energy, and you've got someone who is highly creative, terribly energetic, who is a worker, who has no interest in idle time. Seeing God sitting on his throne, bored stiff, with a television clicker in his hand just doesn't work, does it?

Now, I said all that to ask you this question: Are you prepared to believe that in 15 billion years (not counting whatever time there may have been before now)...are you prepared to believe that this is the first time God has ever done this? Are you prepared to believe that if the universe could go on again another 15 billion years, that this would be the last time he will ever do it?

Well, God has not told us much of his long-range plans and activities. There is nothing in the future of man that qualifies, really, as long-range on God's scale of time. Everything here is super-short. But *he* goes on forever. And could a creative, active, energetic person *stop* creating?

So here we are, walking up to one of the gates of this New Jerusalem—a city that is so splendid that it would put out your eyes almost, with gorgeous foundations and humongous gates put up that are... actually, every gate is a solid pearl, we're told. And so we are ready to walk into this city; what do we expect to find there? There's an isolated scripture back in Hebrews 12, and verse 18, that I thought was interesting in this context. (I won't read the whole passage, but portions of it.) Because, without even necessarily meaning to, he opens up a little glimpse or a little door into this question that I've been asking. The writer of Hebrews says this in verse 18:

### Hebrews 12

AKJV

<sup>18</sup> For you are not come to the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor to blackness, and darkness, and tempest[.]

This is a reference to Mount Sinai, when the children of Israel assembled before the mountain, and they were going to get the Ten Commandments handed down to them from God, and they were all standing there trembling with their knees knocking together. He says, “That's not what we've come to.” In verse 22, he says this:

**Hebrews 12**

AKJV

<sup>22</sup> But you are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, [...]

Aha, that's what we've been talking about—the city of God.

**Hebrews 12**

AKJV

<sup>22</sup> But you are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

<sup>23</sup> To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, [...]

And then there's one more category of people that he says we have come to, as we come to the city of God—the heavenly Jerusalem—the company of angels, the church of the firstborn written in heaven, and to God; it then says we have come...

**Hebrews 12**

AKJV

<sup>23</sup> [...] to the spirits of just men made perfect[.]

Now, we can't know in this life—there's no revelation to this effect; there are only these little hints that God drops on us from time to time to let us think about it—but is it possible that the great city will *already* be populated with men and women of other worlds and other times? With more to come later along with us? But perhaps we shouldn't speculate on these things, I don't know...but it's *hard* not to. When God gives you glimpses of things which make *no sense* from our narrow perspective, it is almost as though he is tempting us to look ahead and outward beyond our experience—that he is challenging us to think outside of what we know; to think outside of what we had heard; and to reach for him and try to grope for him as people who will grope in the dark; and to understand *him*, and his greatness, and what he is doing. Oh, I think sometimes for many of us references to the greatness, and the glory, and the power of God are just so many words we have gathered out of the Bible and we use again because it sounds good. But when you begin to get hints of how great he *really is*, how can you *not* speculate? How can you *not* reach out? But then there's Deuteronomy 29, and verse 29, that says this:

**Deuteronomy 29**

AKJV

<sup>29</sup> The secret things belong to the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Well, I can live with that. That's satisfactory to me, because what it tells me is (and what he has hinted at is) that there is *so much more* than I even *begin* to grasp right now, and there is a way of life that I should walk in so that, when the time comes that he can tell us all what it is, I'll be there. I'll know. I'll grasp it. And I'll *shout* with joy when I understand what *really* he is doing, which is far greater than *anything* I can grasp or explain. But back to John; and Revelation 21, verse 17:

**Revelation 21**

AKJV

<sup>17</sup> And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

<sup>18</sup> And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like to clear glass.

Well now, wait a minute, wait a minute. 1500 miles square at the bottom, 1500 miles high, pure gold, how many floors it has we have no idea...Do you understand the mass, the weight of this thing? Well, if it were regular gold what's being described here, of course, is *physically* impossible. It would spin the earth off of its orbit, and who knows where we would go as a result of that kind of weight being placed on the planet. But this is not physical gold. This is *spiritual* gold, if you will. This is a vision in the first place; but there is a reality to what John is describing. But the real world is one that could be sitting here on top of us right now, coming and going by with people passing through us, and us never know it's here—because it's the spirit world, not the physical world. Now, the New Jerusalem *isn't* here, but it could be; and we, us grub worms down here struggling with the earth, would not even know that it's here.

### Revelation 21

AKJV

<sup>19</sup> And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

The middle of this sandwich is a gorgeous emerald green.

### Revelation 21

AKJV

<sup>20</sup> The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

<sup>21</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Well, what does that mean? Gold is not transparent. Well, a “glass” in biblical parlance really oftentimes means a mirror; and what it's telling you is that this gold—streets, walls, whatever it is you're looking at—is so polished that it is like a mirror, like glass. Now, when you really consider what we're seeing here...remember what I told you earlier? John has *only* his experience, John has *only* his life to draw on. He can't...he can't really tell you *what* it is he is seeing; he can only tell you what it looks like to him. Take a gate made out of one pearl, for example. Why you would want a round ball of a pearl that is 16 feet high and wide being a gate...But really what it's probably describing is something that *looks* like mother of pearl—that's kind of translucent in a way and with the shimmering quality of mother of pearl, the varied colors that change as you might step from side to side looking into the gate, makes it a thing of *incredible* beauty.

### Revelation 21

AKJV

<sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

<sup>23</sup> And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

<sup>24</sup> And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

Nations? Kings? Well, the Greek word for nations [*ethnos*, ἔθνος, Strong's G1484] is the word often translated “Gentiles”. And it's really a rather broad word; it means “peoples”. So, he's just simply saying that “the peoples of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it”. “The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it”—that those who have been rulers upon this planet are now bringing every piece of glory, everything they might have ever had of honor, to this city.

**Revelation 21**

AKJV

<sup>25</sup> And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

<sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations [*or the peoples*] into it.

No night there; for, in fact, the beings that live there need no sleep. They need no rest. They are the children of God. They are like him—with his creativity, his energy, his drive. And he (and they) lighten the whole environment—in fact, the whole world.

And so we stand outside the gate of this *enormous* city, this incredibly beautiful city, and the words of John in verse 27 ring in our ears:

**Revelation 21**

AKJV

<sup>27</sup> And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatever works abomination [*which means a detestable or filthy thing*], or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

It makes sense, doesn't it? Why would God allow *anyone* in this place whose spirit and heart were corrupt? Well, how does one get written into the Lamb's book of life? I'd like to be sure my name is there. The fact that it is *the Lamb's* book of life is a hint. It is not the book of the warrior Messiah, the one riding upon a white horse [**Rev. 19:11**]; it's the book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world [**Rev. 13:8**]. One is written into that book by repentance, by coming to the Lamb for mercy, accepting the Lamb of God as your own sacrifice for sin. Baptism must follow, and one must make an effort to live a life of holiness before God; but it is the blood of the Lamb, applied for you, that writes your name in that book. John continues in chapter 22, verse 1:

**Revelation 22**

AKJV

<sup>1</sup> And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

<sup>2</sup> In the middle of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the [*peoples*].

<sup>3</sup> And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

<sup>4</sup> And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Read that: "His name shall be written in their *minds*."

**Revelation 22**

AKJV

<sup>5</sup> And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

<sup>6</sup> And he said to me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show to his servants the things which must shortly be done.

<sup>7</sup> Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

<sup>8</sup> And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. [*As well he might.*]

<sup>9</sup> Then said he to me, See you do it not: for I am your fellow servant, and of your brothers the

prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God [*Not me.*].

<sup>10</sup> And he said to me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

“This is not a time for dawdling. Don’t sew this up so to where people can’t see it; lay it out before them.”

### **Revelation 22**

*AKJV*

<sup>11</sup> He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

You know, without getting technical about this passage, there’s something to think about: There comes a time when it is too late to turn around. The time to set your life right is *now*. If you don’t do it now, then the chances are, you never will—not even when the world is coming down around your ears. So, when the words of the prophecy began to be given, and when they really begin to come to pass, he says, “Well, if you’re unjust you might as well go on. Let him that is holy be holy. Let him that is righteous be righteous.” And in verse 12:

### **Revelation 22**

*AKJV*

<sup>12</sup> And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

<sup>13</sup> I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Now, let me deal with one small problem: In the light of what we know about salvation... Salvation is by grace and not of works, and there’s nothing we can do to save ourselves. Then why does he tell me that in doing God’s commandments I gain access to the tree of life? I’ll try to explain. How can you possibly be washed clean while you are still playing in the mud? On the day of Pentecost, when Peter had convicted his audience of their sins, they asked him,

### **Acts 2**

*KJ2000*

<sup>37</sup> [...] Men and brethren, what shall we do?

<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

To repent is to be sorry for your sins, and to stop sinning (at least, to the best of your strength). Get up out of the mud so God can wash you clean, and don’t go back in the mud again. Now, how hard is that to understand?

### **Revelation 22**

*KJ2000*

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

<sup>15</sup> For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

<sup>16</sup> I Jesus have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

<sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

<sup>18</sup> For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

<sup>19</sup> And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

<sup>20</sup> He who testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen [*says John*]. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

<sup>21</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

And so ends the great Book of Revelation. It's been an even a greater inspiration than I thought it would be. We've been 28 broadcasts in working our way through the book. If you'd like to know how to get the whole series, give us a call or drop us a line at the address we'll give you in a moment. And don't forget to tune in *next* time for a new series—same station, same time. And remember, God does not intend to spend eternity with a bunch of losers. We were *born to win*.

Transcript of a *Born to Win*  
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