

The Seven Beatitudes of the Revelation

Introduction

This treatise draws together a number of subjects with which the reader is probably familiar and which are relevant to the end times and our processing towards the perfection of the Body of Christ.

It is not intended to be a comprehensive study of these topics, but rather an outline, presented in a meditative fashion suitable for home study. The theme of the booklet is our preparation for these coming events.

It is suggested that the reader look carefully at these beatitudes one by one and meditate on the truth expressed, together with whatever wider topic each one reveals. In this way we can see what is expected of us in these times of preparation, and hence avoid the pitfalls of Satan which may cause us to miss the inheritance which is ours.

The Seven Beatitudes of the Revelation

an inspirational meditation by J. R. Ewers

There are sometimes questions as to why we study eschatology. "These things are going to happen whether we know about them or not." Or, "some of the pictures are difficult to understand and we get confused." This is very true, and knowledge, for its own sake, of these things will do nothing towards our salvation. However, the Lord Himself says (Rev 1:3) that much blessing will come to those who diligently study to understand the prophetic messages of the end times which His Revelation contains. This paper is not intended to be a comprehensive study on this subject, but outlines, in a meditative fashion, suitable for home study, our need of preparation for these coming events. As our understanding increases, we can see what is expected of us and hence avoid the pitfalls set by Satan, which may cause us to miss the inheritance which is ours.

There is nothing particularly critical about the beatitudes in the book of Revelation. However they do describe the environment in which the blessings are obtained and where security and true knowledge of our condition can be found. They also form a framework on which to discuss these matters.

There are seven in all, but they are not grouped together as in Matthew, but are spread throughout the book of Revelation. It is as though John was reminded of these things by the events before him, and every so often the Lord would prompt him to emphasise some point. You will see that they are often interrelated and one leads on to another.

Bible students will know that the word ***blessed*** does not just mean happy, which is just a fleshly (but nice) emotion. *Blessed* involves the deeper connotation of joy and

spiritual fulfilment. If we are to have these things throughout eternity, it behoves us to "think on these things".

Beatitude No. 1

Rev 1:3

***Blessed is he that readeth,
and those that hear the
words of this prophecy,
and keep those things
which are written therein:
for the time is at hand.***

This first beatitude answers the question of why we study this prophecy and the other associated end times prophecies. The *time is at hand*. If it was at hand then, it is even more so now; even imminent! Because it **is** at hand we are exhorted in the further beatitudes as to what our behaviour should be.

Firstly, reading and hearing engender faith. Without faith, progress is impossible. The events described in this book are powerful, and the consequences described for certain courses of action are horrific. If we do not have faith that God can do what He has said He will do, regarding His elect, we can easily become distressed and turn out of the way. The faith that we need for this comes from reading and hearing this prophecy.

Rom 10:17 So then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

This hearing is not our ears responding to the physical sound waves, but our hearts responding to the message, so that the word becomes incarnate; a part of us.

Gal 3:2 Received ye the Spirit by or by the hearing of faith ?

There is no way that we can receive the Spirit, or anything else,

by obeying the letter of the word that comes to us, but by appropriating it so that it becomes faith in us.

Acts 14:27 And when they gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

The door of faith was opened by the preaching of the word.

Wherever the word is preached (or read) and is accepted by receptive hearts, faith wells up and becomes the substance of our steadfastness in Him.

Secondly, this beatitude says that we must *keep* the things written. This does not just mean to file them away for future reference, but to protect them against all those spiritual devices which are sure to come and try to take them away. The word is the same as the one we use for the battlements of a castle; the keep. It will take spiritual fortitude and a tenacity which comes from the resurrection life in us on the basis of our faith, to protect what we receive.

Col 1:21-23 And you hath he reconciled if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, ..."

1 Pet 1:3-7 ... unto a lively hope ... to an inheritance undefiled ... kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ... rejoice ... that the trial of your faith ... might be found unto praise and honour and glory ...

James 1:3,12 ... the trying of your faith worketh patience. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life ...

The enduring of the trial of our faith, or the keeping of *those things*, is a necessary prerequisite to our receiving the blessings; but the blessings are enormous !

"For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes 5:9).

As we shall see in the further beatitudes, the trials are great, and the protection of what we believe, will be a major undertaking, but we have Him (Jn 14:16) who "is called alongside of us to help us" (Comforter, Greek: *paraclete*), and we have the faith we have received by the true hearing of the word.

Beatitude No. 2

Rev 14:13

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

This beatitude is presented at the time when the Antichrist is about to rule in the world for the 3¹/₂ year period; when the vials of wrath of the Lord are to be poured out upon the world. The pronouncement is prompted by the courage shown by the martyrs who would not take the mark of the beast. These are those believers, known as the remnant of the seed of the bride (Rev 12:17), who have not allowed the cross to work in their lives (or "lay down their lives") to bring them to perfection, or

who have been caught by the tail of the red dragon of Rev 12. They can also be identified with the foolish virgins of Matt 25, who having once received the Spirit, allowed themselves to become destitute of His presence.

The term, *from henceforth*, is significant. It is implying that those who are not in the wilderness, in the bride company, will remain in the area dominated by the Antichrist, and as the Holy Spirit will be taken up from the earth, they will have to resist the power of evil in their own strength, *from henceforth*.

They need to rest from their labours. They will have to bear the abuse and affliction of the Antichrist, and as they do not bow to him, they are no longer able to buy or sell and their lives are forfeit (Rev 14:15,17). There is no other way for them to participate in the millennial period or eternity, except that they lay down their lives and become part of the first resurrection. (See No 5) This is significant labour ! and the Spirit mercifully declares their rest.

As an addendum we are told that their works *follow* them. This word *follow* is an interesting one and Vine's Dictionary says it does not mean just coming behind, but has a meaning of "union in the way", or "behaving in the same manner as". Here it is expressing the fact that the martyrs actions are commensurate with the state of their hearts. It is because of this that they are accepted by the Lord.

And so he says that they are blessed *which die in the Lord*.

1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body,

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.

To be *in the Lord*, is the basis for many facets of our experience. It describes our place in the body; our position with Him in heavenly places. Galations says we *put on Christ*. If we are to be raised with Him we must be *in Him* (Rom 6). As we see from above, our entrance into Him is through our baptism into His name. This is further amplified by these verses:

Jn 17:21 *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Rom 12:5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.*

Rom 16:7 *... my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*

1 Cor 15:18 *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. But*

This also emphasises how important it is for those, who have been baptised into Christ, to submit to the processing of Hebr 6, and go on unto perfection. If we do not lay down our lives to the dealing of the cross now, we will not become part of that bridal company, but will need to lay down our lives in martyrdom as described in this beatitude. There are further blessings later described (Beatitude No 5) for such as these who die in Christ, together with the multitudes who already *sleep in Jesus*.

1 Thes 4:14 *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

Beatitude No. 3

Rev 16:15

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

This beatitude is expressed as a consequence of Jesus coming as a thief, that is, unannounced and not in a conspicuous way, to his church on the "Day of Perfection". The implication is that it is necessary for us to watch, and be prepared, so that we, who love His appearing (2 Tim 4:8, Tit 2:13), are not caught unawares. When He comes to His church, we shall then know and recognise the event, but those who are *in darkness* will not know what it is all about, and so miss out on the marriage time (Rev 8:1).

1 Thess 5:2-6 and 2 Pet 3:10 describe the day of the Lord also coming as a thief: it seems to be a common analogy. This picture as of a *thief* is described in other places:

Lk 12:36-40 *And ye yourselves (be) like unto men that wait for their lord ... Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: ... if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, ...*

Rev 3:3 *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

Comparison of this last verse with the first beatitude shows many similarities, emphasising the summarising nature of these beatitudes.

The position of the declaration of this beatitude is at the end of the pouring out of the sixth vial, but it is actually referring to the Day of Perfection and as a warning to those who will not be properly "clothed" at that time, and who will be "naked". It is as though John was saying, "Just look at the terrible events which are happening here. Blessed are they who do not have to endure them because they watched and kept their garments at the time of the Day of Perfection. We see the shame of those who didn't and who are now spiritually naked."

Let us consider, firstly, the exhortation to *watch*. As graphically described in Lk 12:35-38, this is not just keeping a casual lookout but the maintaining of a continual spiritual alertness. It is analogous to the watch of a soldier on duty; and the consequences of not watching are just as severe !

The importance Jesus places on "watching" is evident from His admonition to the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, and from the number of times He exhorts them to watch:

Matt 26:40 Could ye not watch with me one hour ?

Mk 13:32-37 But of that day ... knoweth no man ... Take ye heed, watch and pray: And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Secondly, he *keepeth* his garments. This is the same context as we saw the word, *keep*, in the first beatitude; preserve, protect and hold on to. Without the garment we are unable to be part of the "wedding feast".

Matt 22:11,12 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a

man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment ? And he was speechless. Then said the king, ... Bind him ... and cast him into outer darkness; ...

The Greek word for *garment* literally means "anything put on", that is, he was considered to be naked. The garments must also be preserved clean and undefiled and the "keeping" process is part of all that. The church at Sardis receives the message that:

Rev 3:4,5 Thou hast a few names ... which have not defiled their garments; ... they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; ...

Lastly, the garments themselves; what are they ? and how do we obtain them ? Consideration of the following scriptures will show that it is a very common picture to describe our attainment of the righteousness of the Lord. We know that our righteousness is as filthy rags (Is 64:6) and the Lord cannot accept us in that state. So by His grace, as we accept Him by faith, or, are baptised into Him (Rom 6:3, 12:13), or, we put on Christ (Gal 3:27), He covers us with Himself and this is pictured for us, in metaphor, as being clothed by Him. The same picture is given for the time when the Lord covered the people with Himself so that the angel of death would pass over them in Egypt (Ex 12:12,13).

Having been clothed by Him, it is our responsibility to *keep* (protect) our clothes, and to prevent them from being tainted by the world and from dead works; as they now have become the expression of the good works of the new man.

Is 61:10 ... for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.

Rev 19:8 (The bride) be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for fine linen is the righteousness (Greek: right works) of saints.

The maintenance of the garments is important. The bride is to be clothed and spotless (Eph 5:27). Because we are still in the world and our "old man" (Rom 6:6) remains active, though sterile, we can err, and our "righteousness" becomes tainted: we sometimes can operate from a law base, or we can become involved in dead works. The Lord has made provision for us to be cleansed from such activity (1 John 1:7,9) and it is by a continual process of repentance and acceptance of the work of the blood of Christ, that we maintain our "spiritual cleanliness".

1 John 1:7,9 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ... If we confess (repent of) our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and **to cleanse us** from all unrighteousness.

Rev 7:13,14 What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? ... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have **washed their robes**, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

We must be careful, also, that we *keep* (not lose) our attire. It is possible that we can become

disillusioned and lose sight of the vision (the hope of the glory). The result of this is that our covering can be lost. This is foreshadowed by the Lord's statement that a bride can forget her attire. It is vital that we keep our hope ever before us: know and understand the promises of the Lord; know that He will accomplish in us that which He says He will. If we do not do this, it is highly probable that we will be caught up in, and affected by, the ennui of our daily struggles and the petty personal conflicts which beset us daily. In an environment such as this, it is easy to see that our covering could be lost. A slothful attitude is as dangerous.

Prov 29:18 Where there is no vision the people perish (Hebr: Lit. made naked, or, lose their covering).

Jer 2:32 Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire ? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

Prov 23:19-21 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, ... the drunken and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

So let us keep watching carefully and maintain the process of repentance and cleansing in our lives, so that these blessings may be ours.

Beatitude No. 4

Rev 19:9

Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The marriage supper is not discussed specifically in the scriptures, except Rev 19.

Features of it can be inferred from passages such as Lk 14:15-24, Matt 22:2-14, Matt 25:1-13 and the understanding of parallel topics such as the Feasts of Israel.

The placement of the marriage supper in the "time of the end", is more easily understood if it is realised that, in Jewish tradition, the wedding feast did not occur at the time of the marriage ceremony, but at the time of the birth of the first child. If we consider then events of the end times, it is obvious that the *bride* gives birth to a *man child* (Rev 12:5). This is followed by a period in the *wilderness* (Rev 12:6) where she is nourished by those whom God has nominated (Rev 12:4) and protected by the *bridegroom* (Rev 12:7). It is during this 3½ yr period, while the Antichrist is ravaging the earth, that we place the marriage supper.

The sense of this beatitude then becomes evident. The church has already gone through a period of tribulation (Rev 7:14, Jn 16:33, Matt 24:6,7) and judgment has already been called upon her (1 Pet 4:17). She is therefore prepared and able to be a spotless bride (Day of Perfection) and together with those who come to the call of the Spirit and the Bride (Rev 22:17), forms the bridal company during the time of "in-gathering". Being therefore able to participate in the *feast* in the wilderness is a great blessing, for it establishes the credentials of the bridal company and its subsequent action. It will not have to be involved in the affliction of the Antichrist: it will be part of the first resurrection and all that that implies; it will lead on to the New Jerusalem, too, which we will see shortly.

The Greek word translated as *called* has a deeper meaning than a general summons. It describes those who have been named as invitees. The inference is also to include those who actually come. A major concern of the believer is to have assurance that he will be among those who are called. Fairly obviously, the Lord is not going to be partial, but gives to all the choice of acceptance. Nevertheless it is incumbent upon us to respond. *Many are called, but few are chosen.* (Matt 22:14) On the basis of this, the Lord knows those who are his. The names of those who comply are put in "the Lamb's book of life".

2 Tim 2:19 *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

Eph 3:14,15 *... of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named.*

Nah 1:7 *The Lord is good, ... he knoweth them that put their trust in him.*

Jn 10:3,14 *... and he calleth his own sheep by name, ... I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*

Dan 12:1 *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

Phil 4:3 *And I entreat you ... help those ... whose names are in the book of life.*

Is 34:16 *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, ... for my mouth it*

has commanded, and his spirit it has gathered them.

The evidence of the parable of the 10 virgins (Matt 25:1-13) indicates that there are many who believe they are of that company, but, because of their neglect, or perhaps ineptitude, do not measure up and are not admitted to the feast; having a form of godliness but never coming to the truth (2 Tim 3:5, Rom 2:20). This is emphasised by Jesus' indictment of those who did many wonderful works in His name, but from the wrong foundation, and He had to say "I never knew you".

Matt 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father ... depart from me ...

Lk 18:9-14 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ... every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Matt 25:12 Verily I say unto you (the foolish virgins), I know you not.

On the positive side, if we are aware of what the Lord is requiring, then our response to the Lord will be right. We need the *garments* described earlier. We need the *oil* in our lamps; indicative of the work of the Holy Spirit in us. The inference is also that we must be continually filled (Gal 5:25). How important it is for us to have the right attitude of heart as we respond to His call: our attitude to others; our attitude to our self-centre and opinion of ourselves; our attitude to the relative importance of the things of God; our attitude to the study of the knowledge of His will.

It is interesting to look at the negative responses of Lk 14 and be sure we are not harbouring such notions as these:

Lk 14:18 ... I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: ...

The persons here described are those who are establishing an area of ministry which consider to be theirs, exclusively. They are so busy striving to be somebody, that they do not have time to see their place in the body of Christ, and to serve in the order which the Father has set. It is a trap for us all to think that we can believe that there is something that can be done only by us; to seek control of situations in which the body is ministering to itself, so that our prowess is elevated; to believe that there are some in the body who can only be counselled by us (our own sheep).

To avoid this we have to be "body-conscious"; recognising the gifts and ministry graces of our brethren in the body of Christ, and the essential ministry of the corporate.

Lk 14:19 ... I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: ...

This situation describes those who have just "got a terrific team together". They have had rave reviews and are on the verge of great things for the Lord(?). This is a trap of dead works, relying on the natural strength depicted by the beasts, for it is not God who is being glorified, but the leader of the "great team". They are just too busy with their "evangelistic zeal" to hear what God is saying to them.

To avoid this, we need to be sure to set aside time to be alone with the Lord (Matt 6:6), where the Lord has time to speak to us and we

can continually reaffirm our submission to Him. There is a place here, too, for the corporate to be a mirror to reflect the image we project and to moderate our over-busy behaviour.

Lk 14:20 ... I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

Here is an even sadder case, where the person has opted for an apparently easier alliance and has given himself over to the spiritual harlot, the false church, the false bride. (Prov 9, especially v 13-18.) These are the ones who have found the way of the cross too demanding and have decided to live according to the apparently easier demands of the so-called moral, or social, gospel. Unbeknown to them, their fate is bound to the woman they have married (Rev 17:3-6).

The appraisal of the counterfeit bride is a matter for great discernment, so that we are not deceived (Matt 24:24). She is beautiful and appealing and seems desirable. John, himself, looked upon her *with great admiration* and had to be rebuked by the angel (Rev 17:6,7). To avoid this, we have to be sure of our identity in Christ, as sons of the Father, and know the foundations upon which we are based (Prov 9:6).

The indictment of the Lord for all of these is that they will never taste of the supper which He had prepared (Lk 14:24).

The blessing of this beatitude, then, is that those who do obey the summons with the right heart condition become part of the bridal company and will avoid the tribulation of the ungodly, as they will be nurtured in the wilderness, and eventually become part of that eternal plan of glory which the further chapters of the book describe.

Beatitude No. 5

Rev 20:6

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years

The understanding of the sense of this beatitude lies in understanding the events, and their sequence, which occur in the last thousand years; the millenium.

1 Thess 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ...

It begins with the coming of our Lord in glory. Those who take part in the first resurrection are those who are dead in Christ. Who are these ? We spoke about them in beatitude No 2: they include those who became martyrs during the 3½ yr rule of Antichrist (Rev 20:4); those who *sleep in Jesus* (1 Cor 15:18); those prior to the cross who have received God's approbation (Matt 8:11, Lk 13:28). After these have risen, they will be joined by those of us who are alive and remain.

1 Thess 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The only ones alive at this time are of the bridal company. This multitude of people minister to the Lord, as the beatitude explains,

during the whole millenium. The rest have been put to death, with the world, by the wrath of God (Rev 16) during the 3¹/₂ yr "great tribulation". The *false prophet* and the *beast* are then consigned to *the lake of fire* (Rev 19:20), and Satan is bound (confined) until the 1000 years are complete (Rev 20:2).

Rev 20:5 *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. (Note: The rest of this verse can cause some confusion, unless it is realised that its reference to the first resurrection is in relation to the events of v 4, that is, the rising of the dead in Christ and their place during the millenium.)*

At the end of the thousand years, a second resurrection takes place: the rest of the dead rise and, when Satan is released *for a season* (Rev 20:7), they attempt to overthrow the city of God, but He destroys them. They have God's verdict pronounced upon them (Rev 20:12) and are also consigned to *the lake of fire*, together with Satan. Do not be deceived that they have any salvation at this point. Their *works* are already manifest in that they were not part of the first resurrection.

Rev 20:13-15 *... This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Eternity is then manifest and the separation is complete (2 Cor 6:17, Rev 18:4, Matt 25:31-34). Those resurrected first are not only blessed but holy (separated unto God). The *second death* has no power over them because they are not subject to this time of judgment: they have already learned to "lay it

down" (See No 7) and have been subjected to God's judgment through the way of the cross (Heb 6:2, 10:19,20). Review of the progress of this company through the previous beatitudes will prove that the way of the cross is continually changing us together from glory to glory (Heb 2:10, 2 Cor 3:18) into the person God wants us to be. While it is true that those who are saved in the last days will receive the same reward as us (Matt 20:1-16), it is imperative that we maintain ourselves by means of the processes of repentance (1 John 1:7-9) as we have discussed in previous beatitudes.

Sadly, there will be many who do not accept the grace to persevere and who repudiate their enlightenment and go back to the natural (carnal) life (Gal 3:3). The finality of this is shown in Heb 6:

Heb 6:4-6 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened ... If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; ...*

These, with the rest of the ungodly, in the second resurrection company, face an eternity separated from Him. It is a true blessing that those who are part of the first resurrection have no fear of this, for they face an eternity in the presence and glory of the Lord.

Beatitude No. 6

Rev 22:7

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book

Comparison with the first beatitude will show that this one has

the same message. The urgency is repeated. The injunction of the message in the first chapter of the book, is reinforced, here, at the end of the last chapter. This is a good indication of how seriously the Lord wants us to take this message. Unless we do, our future salvation is at risk.

1 Thes 5:9 *For God has not appointed us unto wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Heb 2:1-3 *... we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord; and was confirmed unto us ... ?*

Beatitude No. 7

Rev 22:14

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.

Here we have the culmination of the whole. The end of the process results in the rewards depicted in these two metaphors.

The tree of life is first described in the midst of the garden, east in Eden (Gen 2:8). Our access to this source of true life was taken away because of the fall, but here becomes our portion. (Rev 22:2) We have access now to resurrection life (Rom 6:4,11), but

as over-comers in first-love, it will be ours to partake of throughout eternity (Rev 2:4,5,7). The detail of this facet of our relationship with the Lord has broadened from Genesis to Revelation. The garden in Eden has become the New Jerusalem: the tree of life has enlarged from being the tree in the midst of the garden to the all enveloping life source, spreading on both sides of the river of life from the throne of God. The power of our everlasting (Amplified: indestructible) life through Melchisedec (Heb 7:15,16,25) has become fully manifest through those who become part of that order.

Gen 2:8 *... the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; ... **the tree** of life also in the midst of the garden, ...*

Ezek 47:1-12 *... behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the house ... he measured a thousand ... the waters were to the ankles ... he measured a thousand ... the waters were to the knees ... he measured a thousand ... the waters were to the loins ... he measured a thousand ... waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over ... at the bank of the river were very **many trees** ... and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.*

Rev 22:2 *... on **either side** of the river, was there **the tree** of life ... and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

We will have no right to this. The Greek word for *right* is better translated "privilege of access". Obviously by this stage, our perfection of relationship is such that the legalistic connotation of "right" is not real. All that is being said is that, as access to the tree of life was forbidden to man after the fall (Gen 3:24), and restored

through Christ and our overcoming in Him through the way of the cross (Heb 10:19,20), it will be fully available to us, if we *do His commandments*. Part of the function of the tree of life is the restoration to wholeness of the *nations* (Rev 22:2, Ezek 47:12).

The twelve gates (Rev 21:12) of the city are never closed (Rev 21:25), but are *kept* by angels to safeguard the entrance (Rev 21:12). Those who are not permitted entrance are described in Rev 21:27. By inference, those who are candidates for the second death, who we discussed in No 5, will not be permitted to enter.

Rev 21:8 *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in ... the second death.*

Rev 21:27 *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

It is apparent that those who have been proven in the previous beatitudes do have access and little more needs to be said.

Rev 21:7 *He that overcometh shall inherit (these) things;*

All this is dependent on the doing of His commandments. The whole basic motivation of this *doing* is first-love (Mk 12:30,31, Jn 13:34), and all the values of trust, submission, etc. which spring from this in the life of a christian. However, in the light of this topic, there are some commandments which need special emphasis.

We need to be walking in the way of the cross, identifying

ourselves in His sufferings; taking up our cross daily and following Him ("union in the way", See No 2); maintaining our grace to lay down our new life, our new birth, so that it can be restored into resurrection life in Christ. Obeying His commandments means doing (living) all these things.

Mk 12:30,31 *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

Jn 13:34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

Jn 15:14 *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

Phil 3:10,11 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

Rom 8:17 *... heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Mk 8:34 *... Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

Jn 10:17,18 *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I*

*have power to take it again.
This commandment have I
received of my Father.*

If all this is just head knowledge (1 Cor 8:1), it has no worth for us, but it needs to be lived and appropriated as a way of life, so that it becomes *meat* for our maturing growth. I believe that it is impossible for us to comprehend the grandeur, the magnificence, the glory of this relationship in the bride-city. The Lord has tried to excite our finite minds by describing some aspects of it in metaphor, but finding a synthesis of all these pictures is beyond us (1 Cor 2:9). But there is sufficient for us to realise that it will be wonderful.

To be part of the company,
chosen by God as a place for Him

to dwell (Rev 21:3) is worth some pain for a little while (Rom 8:18), as we become perfected in our power to "lay it down" and become the people that God wants us to be.

*Rev 21:3-5 Behold, the tabernacle of
God is with men, and he
shall dwell with them, and
they shall be his people,
and God himself shall be
with them, and be their
God. And God shall wipe
away all tears from their
eyes; and there shall be no
more death, neither sorrow,
nor crying, neither shall
there be any more pain:
for the former things are
passed away. ... Behold,
I make all things new.*

J. R. Ewers
Adelaide
October 1991