

A New City

Restoration of Faith Bible Study Notes (Revelation 21:10-27)ⁱ

Friday 12 August 2022

Introduction/Background

Last week we started our study of the Book of Revelation chapter 21 verses 1-9 talking about “A New Home” which was the New Heaven and the New Earth. The key verse for last week was Revelation 21: 6 *“He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.”* Talking about Jesus being there at the beginning of time and also at the end of time, He is the A through Z and He is everything in our lives.

Tonight we are going to complete Chapter 21 of the book of Revelation talking about “A New City” which is namely the New Jerusalem which is part of the new Heaven that we introduced last week coming down out of the clouds like a bride adorned for her husband.

Background Context

The book of Revelation was written about the year 95-96 AD by the Apostle John on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. The island is located off of the coast of modern day Turkey which was off the coast just west of the city of Ephesus in his time. John was the pastor at the church in Ephesus that had been started by Paul on one of his previous missionary journeys (Ref: Acts 18-19). John had been punished and exiled to the island of Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian for preaching Jesus and evangelizing in Ephesus. The island of Patmos is about 13-14 square miles (34 square km) so it is a small island, mostly barren, and today it has about 3000 people who live there that mostly support their tourist trade. In the first century, only people who were exiled by the Romans lived there. It was the practice of the Romans to kick you off of the boat in the bay and then when you got

to shore you were on your own to fend for yourself on the island. That was your punishment which was banishment.

John was having a vision on the Lord's Day Sunday when he wrote down the vision and it became the book of Revelation. (Ref: Revelation 1:9) I note here that the name of the book is Revelation. Note, no 's' on the end, it is not Revelations plural, it is Revelation singular. The book features a type of literature known as apocalyptic. The root of the word apocalypse does not mean "worldwide catastrophe" as we often think of it today, but rather it means "uncovering the hidden" or a revealing. The book's purpose is to uncover or to reveal and give a revelation of Jesus Christ and God's end time's plan that conquers evil Satan and his allies.

[The City's Descent \(Revelation 21:10-14\)](#)

[Eternal Glory](#)

[Read Revelation 21:9-11]ⁱⁱ

⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

So picking up where we left off last week in verse 9... So this angel, who was one of the same angels from the seven bowls of God's wrath in back in Revelation chapter 16, is now showing the apostle John this vision of the proverbial bride of Christ. The real bride of Christ is us the body of believers who are now joined with Him in heaven. He takes John away in the spirit to a great mountain and he showed John the Holy City the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

This new Jerusalem, God's holy city, is descending down to the new earth. And it is so beautiful as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I still remember the day of my wedding some 24 almost 25 years ago now, and standing at the altar

when my wife came into the church beautifully dressed and everybody stood up for her to make her entrance. It was a beautiful sight to see, as will be this event.

Question: The city that I would most like to visit or vacation in is? City to live in?

External Perspective

[Read Revelation 21:12-14]

¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

In verses 12-14 we start to see the design of the New Jerusalem. The city is square with high walls and 12 entrance gates: 3 on the east, 3 on the north, 3 on the south, and 3 on the west. To me that indicates strong yet totally open and inviting as there are 3 open gates on all 4 sides of the city. They don't need walls or guards for the city for protection, as the enemies of God are all conquered now and they are all in the lake of fire. However, there are walls and there is a single angel stationed at each gate. On the 12 gates were written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, and on the 12 foundations were written the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

Question: Isn't that a bit backward? To me shouldn't the names of the 12 tribes of Israel be the foundation and not the gates, and the names of the 12 apostles be the gates? Why do you think the names are arranged this way on the foundations and on the gates?

Ezekiel had a similar vision of a New Jerusalem with similar gates in Ezekiel 48:30-35. **[Read Ezekiel 48:30-35]** Scholars think that Ezekiel's vision is of the New Jerusalem yet to come in the 3rd Temple period or millennial reign period which is still future for us, and it is not of the same New Jerusalem described in Revelation as that one is far future even past the 1000 year millennial reign of Jesus. Plus the dimensions of the 2 New Jerusalem's do not match. In Ezekiel, his vision of a New Jerusalem is 18,000 cubits square, which is about 6 miles (9.5 km) around it. In the current Jerusalem we have today the old city is about 0.9 square miles, and in Ezekiel's Jerusalem vision it is 1.5 square miles, so they are almost the same size.

While we will see here in a few more verses that the New Jerusalem described in Revelation is a much larger city.

The City's Detail (Revelation 21:15-21)

The Measurements

[Read Revelation 21:15-17]

¹⁵ The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. ¹⁶ The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. ¹⁷ The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick.

Here we see a new unit of measurement used in the Biblical text (only 2 usages in the Bible, both are in Revelation) which is the Roman stadia. 1 stadia is about 600-625 ft or 1/8 of a mile, or about 8 stadia per 1 mile. So here in this New Jerusalem we see it is huge at a little over 1300 miles (12,000 stadia * 600 ft/stadia / 5280 ft/mile) on each side! And 1300 miles high too? Like a Borg Cube from Star Trek? LOL. Definitely not the same as today's Jerusalem at all nor of Ezekiel's measly 1.5 miles on each side New Jerusalem that he saw.

Many Bible scholars believe that his measurements given here were over exaggerated and symbolic in nature to indicate that this was an all-encompassing city for all believers of all generations Old Testament and New Testament ages. The free clues we are given here is first the number 12,000 which is then number 12 times 1000 so a fullness of 12 prophetically speaking. (12 tribes, 12 apostles, and 12 * 1000 stadia) The second clue we are given is the phrase in verse 17 "using human measurement" for the wall thickness, so the previous measurement given was not a human measurement but it was instead a spiritual or symbolic measurement. Then third the thickness is 144 cubits which the number 144 prophetically means God's ultimate in creation.

The Materials

[Read Revelation 21:18-21]

¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of

precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

Usually the usage of precious stones in a city would be used for adornment or for royalty, but in this city they are everywhere and used in the various bases of the city.

Conclusion (Revelation 21:22-27)

[Read Revelation 21:22-27]

²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Question: How does John's heavenly vision of the New Jerusalem city provide peace and hope for the follower of Jesus Christ? How can knowing this affect how we live here on earth today?

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