

New Jerusalem: Heaven on Earth (Rev. 21-22) – Part 2

I. THE NEW JERUSALEM IS OUR ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE

- A. John saw the New Heavens and Earth following the Great Tribulation (Rev. 6-19). This passage will be very significant to the saints in the Great Tribulation. They will see their inheritance that will be given to them at Jesus' Second Coming. Our eternal inheritance is to live in face to face relationship with God in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth as we rule God's vast empire.
- ¹ I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." (Rev. 21:1-3)*
- B. At the Second Coming, Jesus will establish His Throne of Glory on earth in the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem (Mt. 25:31-32; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 43:4-7; Zech. 6:12-13). Jesus' Throne is also established in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:3).
- C. The New Jerusalem will descend to a place just above Millennial Jerusalem. The joining of the two Jerusalems establishes what I refer to as the "Corridor of Glory" in which 12 significant aspects of God's plan come into a dynamic convergence. (Converge means to come together from different directions to an intersecting point to achieve union). The term convergence points to the paradox of both dimensions (heavenly and earthly), each having distinction, yet with a significant merging or overlapping as a unified reality.
- D. This "Corridor," is described by Isaiah as including a *cloud* (pillar of glory reaching from earth to heaven) with elements of *smoke* and *shining fire*. This "Corridor" is described by Ezekiel as a whirlwind (the vast glorious tornado funnel that engulfs Jesus' Chariot-Throne, Ezek. 1).
- E. Jesus' Throne or His vast governmental complex includes the Millennial Temple and the New Jerusalem. The government of heaven and of earth come fully together as both Millennial and heavenly Jerusalems are brought together. It will be the joy of the whole Millennial earth (Ps. 48:1-6). As the psalmist saw into the vastness of God's purpose related to the New Jerusalem, he testified that his insight into God's Word (commandment) grew exceedingly broad.
- ⁹⁶ I have seen the consummation of all perfection, but Your commandment is exceedingly broad. (Ps. 119:96)*
- F. The New Jerusalem is where the saints in resurrected bodies will live forever in God's presence. However, they will reign in the government on the Millennial earth (Mt. 19:28, Lk. 22:29). The saints will easily travel between the New Jerusalem and the earth (as angels do now). We will come much more frequently because the veil between the two realms will be lifted. The OT saints had revelation of the New Jerusalem and lived in light of it (Heb. 11:10, 16). When we see the diamond City then the glory of our brass trophies on earth fades.

II. TWO VIEWS OF THE NEW JERUSALEM: RELATIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL (REV. 21-22)

- A. First, the description of the City is given in relational terms or in nearness to God (Rev. 21:1-8). The foundational reality is of God dwelling with His people on earth (v. 3, 6). It describes the eternal state of the resurrected saints in the City in face to face relationship with God. It describes the quality of the spiritual life of the saints after the Second Coming. This is in the chronological progression of Revelation immediately after the Great White Throne events (Rev. 20:1-15).
- B. Second, the description of the City is given in functional terms. It will function as the ultimate Holy of Holies and the garden of Eden (21:9-22:5).
- C. **Overview:** the City's glorious splendor (21:9-11); her gates and foundations (21:12-14); her layout and size is 1,380miles (7,286,400 ft.) in length, height, and width. A furlong (NIV stadia) is a Greek measurement that is approx. 600 feet. Thus, 600 feet x 12,000 furlong equals 7,286,400 feet (1,380miles). The wall is 216 feet thick (21:15-17) and is made with precious stones like those on the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:17-20; 39:10; Rev. 21:18-20); her gates and streets are described in Rev. 22:2 as viewed from a distance.

III. THE CITY SEEN IN RELATIONAL TERMS: NEARNESS TO GOD (REV. 21:1-8)

- A. Our eternal inheritance is to live in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth. The New Jerusalem is the place saints are taken at the rapture to live with God forever. It can be viewed as the Father's gift and/or Jesus' diamond City (wedding gift) for His Bride. The adorning of a bride refers to that which spares no detail or extravagance in beauty preparations.
¹ I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:1-2)
- B. The New Jerusalem rests forever on the New Earth. Theologians debate on whether this present earth will be renovated (renewed) or annihilated after the Millennium. The words "passed away" are the same used in 2 Cor. 5:17. This earth will continue forever (Ps. 37:29; 78:69; 104:5; 105:10-11; 125:1-2; 1 Chr. 23:25; 28:8; Isa. 60:21; Ezek. 37:25; Joel 3:20).
- C. The 5-fold message is given from the Holy Spirit (21:3-4). Seven negatives on this earth will be removed forever on the New Earth: no sea (21:1), death, sorrow, crying, pain (21:4), curse (22:3), nor night (21:25; 22:5). All that diminished our life will be totally and eternally reversed.
³ I heard a loud voice from heaven (Holy Spirit) saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain..." (Rev. 21:3-4)
- D. Revelation of the Father (*majesty, generosity, severity*) is the ultimate prize and assurance of City's welfare. In this 7-fold message we see the Father's role, responsibility and commitments to us. The Father speaks in a direct way for second time in Revelation (Rev. 1:8; 21:5).

IV. THE CITY IN FUNCTIONAL TERMS: HOLY OF HOLIES & GARDEN OF EDEN (21:9-22:5).

- A. The New Jerusalem will function as the ultimate Holy of Holies and the garden of Eden. John elaborates on 21:1-8 by giving us details of the City. It is seen as the prophetic fulfillment of two places in which God dwelt with His people throughout history.
- B. John sees the City from a high mountain from two views: from an external view as the ultimate Holy of Holies (21:9-21) and the internal view as the ultimate garden of Eden (21:22-22:5)
⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God... (Rev. 21:9-10)
- C. The City is called the Bride which refers to the people and the City in relationship together. The very components of the City (The food, water, color, smells, fragrances, music, etc.) will renew and inspire bridal love in the people for Jesus.
- D. From the literary structure of the Book of Revelation, it functions as a parenthetical section like Rev. 17:1-19:10. Thus, the events here do not unfold in chronological sequence after Rev. 21:1-8. The angel took John to a mountain to show him the Bride in Rev. 21:9-10. This was intended to parallel the angel taking John to the wilderness to show him the Great Harlot in Rev. 17:1-3.

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY AS THE HOLY OF HOLIES: EXTERNAL VIEW (21:9-21)

- A. The City is described as a cube (21:16) like the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:19-20). Fellowship with God is pictured in the ministry of the high priest in the Holy of Holies. The City is described with the same precious stones that the high priest wore on his breastplate when going into the Holy of Holies (21:19-20).
- B. The City's glory: is seen as Jesus' Bride that is filled with the Shekinah glory as prophetically seen in Solomon's Temple (2 Chr. 5-7). The jasper light is the Shekinah glory of God (Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5). God's Throne was prophetically seen in the ark of the covenant (Rev. 22:3-4).
¹⁰ ...The holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. (Rev. 21:10-11)
- C. The City's design: gates (21:12b-14), walls (21:12a, 15-18) and foundations (21:12, 19-20).
¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates...14 Now the wall of the City had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:12-14)
- D. The City's construction: walls (21:12, 15-18), foundations (21:12, 19-20), gates (21:12-14) and street (21:21; 22:2). Jewels of the high priest (Ex. 28:17-20) picturing his nearness to God. Eight of the precious stones were on the high priest's breastplate when he went into the Holy of Holies (Ex. 28:17-20; 39:10). The high priest's breastplate spoke of nearness to God's heart.

- E. The City's size: the walls of the New Jerusalem are 1,380 miles (7,286,400 ft.) in length, height, and width (Rev. 21:12b-14). A furlong (NIV stadia) is a Greek measurement that is approx. 600 feet (200 yards or 1/8 of a mile). The walls are 216 feet or 72 yards thick (21:15-17). The cube like dimensions parallel the Holy of Holies (cube: 1 Kings 6:19-20).

¹⁵ He who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the City, its gates, and its wall. 16 The City is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the City with the reed: 12,000 furlongs (1,380 miles). Its length, breadth (width), and height are equal (cube). 17 He measured its wall: 144 cubits (216 feet thick)... (Rev. 21:15-17)

VI. DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY AS THE GARDEN OF EDEN: INTERNAL VIEW (21:22-22:5)

- A. John gives us an internal view of the City as the ultimate *Garden of Eden*. He describes the City's beauty (21:22-27) and its life with face to face communion with God (22:1-5). It is a worshipping City with no temple (21:22; 22:4a); an illuminated City with no sun (21:23; 22:5); a ruling City with God's Throne (21:24, 26; 22:3-5d); a working City that serves (21:25b; 22:3c, 5a) and a holy City without any sin (21:27, 8; 22:14-15).
- B. Rev. 21:22-22:5 describes some of the interaction between the Millennial kings and the New Jerusalem. It also reveals the eternal state of the resurrected saints in the New Jerusalem. There will be no change in their relationship in the City during or after the Millennium.
- ²⁴ The (Millennial) nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the (Millennial) earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Rev. 21:24-27)***
- C. John described the beautiful light source of the City (21:23-24).
- ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 The nations...shall walk in its light... (Rev. 21:23-24)***
- D. Life inside the City (Rev. 22:1-5): the River of Life (22:1) and the Tree of Life (22:2) point back to life in the garden of Eden.
- ¹ And he showed me a pure river of water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:1-2)***
- E. The saints shall serve God in a face to face relationship filled with holiness (Rev. 22:3-5). God's light will impart power, wisdom and holiness to those ruling with Him (Rev. 22:5). The saints will not be idle but will be administrating His government with authority over a billion galaxies.
- ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the Throne God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:3-5)***