

APOCALYPSE: The City of God

Revelation 21:9-27

Pastor Jason Dennett's Teaching Notes

NKJV - "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, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. 14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And 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: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. 22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 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 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the 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."

I. The **MEMBERS** of God's City (v.9-11)

II. The **MEASUREMENTS** of God's City (v.12-21)

III. The **MAGNIFICENCE** of God's City (v.22-27)

The **MEMBERS** of God's City (v.9-11a) - "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." 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, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

- **"..Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."** - The apostle John declares there will be a magnificent city where glorified believers will live during this period—the New Jerusalem! Many believers are unaware that one of the main descriptions of the Eternal Heavens, is that of a perfect celestial city. This is interesting, since most humans think of "getting away" to the beach or mountains for a time of enjoyment and relaxation. However, God made us to exist in relationship with Himself and other people, and it will be fully embodied when this heavenly metropolis appears. This glorious city of "New Jerusalem" will be the dwelling place of the redeemed in eternity, and will serve as the New Capital of the New Earth.
- **Just think of it:** seeing the LORD face to Face, and physically dwelling with Him for all of eternity, in this perfect city and His newly created universe! Surely, this will be the true joy and adventure of eternity!
 - **Rev 22:3-5 NKJV** - "... the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 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."

- **New Jerusalem is here described as "a bride" who is adorned and made ready for her Husband.** This is obviously a description of the Bride of Christ, the Church, as we will be the ones inhabiting and living in New Jerusalem. John's Gospel (Jn 3:29) also refers to the Church as "the bride" and Jesus as our "bridegroom" who will come and receive us to Himself.
- **We also see that the city of New Jerusalem is "great" and "holy", speaking of its magnitude and its purity.** It will be the greatest city ever inhabited by human beings, and it will be one that is absolutely perfect, completely free of any sinful presence or activity.
- **New Jerusalem is also described as having the "glory of God" within it.** This may refer to the "Shekinah" glory of the Old Testament, a visible representation of God's presence, that filled the Tabernacle in the "Holy of Holies" as described in Exodus 40: 34-35.

The **MEASUREMENTS** of God's City (v.12-21) - **"Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."**

- John further describes the city as having a high wall surrounding it, twelve gates (3 on each side), mighty angels at each gate, and twelve huge foundations. He tells us that each of the foundations is inscribed with one of the names of the twelve apostles, and that each gate is inscribed with the names of the tribes of Israel. This is fitting, as the apostles' teaching and the Jewish scriptures form the spiritual foundation and "entrance" through which we pass, to come into Christ's Kingdom! (Read John 10: 7-9) Based on this description, it's obvious to see that this is describing a literal and physical city that will actually exist in our universe. I say this, because there are certain Bible teachers and Christian groups who seek to "spiritualize" and "allegorize" the book of Revelation, such as Calvinists, Reformed, and other "Amillennial" believers. The very fact that these precise details are given, clearly shows this is meant to be taken literally, at face value, and that this is a real city being seen and described by John.

"And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal."

- Regarding its size, we see that the city of New Jerusalem will be constructed as a gigantic and perfect cube! John tells us that its length, width, and breadth are all the same. He tells us that the city measures "12,000 furlongs" on each of its sides. This is an old measurement, but we can calculate the size using modern conversions:
 - **1 furlong = .125 miles**
 - **Length of New Jerusalem: 12,000 x .125 miles = 1,500 miles**
 - **Distance from New York City to Denver, Colorado: 1,493 miles**
- **Each side of this cubed Heavenly City will be 1,500 miles long, about the distance from the city of New York City to Denver, Colorado; or the distance from Los Angeles to Minneapolis, Minnesota!** This city of New Jerusalem will almost stretch across the length of the United States of America –incredible!
- **However, don't forget that it's also a staggering 1,500 miles high into the atmosphere!** How can we envision this height in our mind's eye? Well, consider the fact that the highest mountains on earth are only about 5 miles tall, and that commercial airliners normally fly at around 6 miles high. In contrast to this, the New Jerusalem will rise 1,500 miles into the air, which is well beyond Earth's present

atmosphere. The entire atmosphere of our planet only reaches about 300 miles at its maximum, which means that the New Jerusalem will be bulging out 1,200 miles beyond the limits of the ozone, into outer space!

- This also means, that if New Jerusalem were to have 12 feet per story in its structure, as most buildings do today, **this Heavenly City would rise 600,000 stories high**, breaking through the atmosphere into outer space!
 - [The Cubic Volume of New Jerusalem: 1,500 miles x 1,500 miles x 1,500 miles = 3,375,000,000 cubic miles](#)
- **The massive dimensions of New Jerusalem work out to be a total volume of over 3.3 billion cubic miles in volume.** This is a greater volume than that of the moon! With today's population of about 7 billion, each person on earth would be able to have a "mansion" in this city that would be about .5 miles long, wide, and high. It will truly be an enormously massive structure!
- **What about the diameter of New Jerusalem? It calculates out to be well over 2,400 miles!** For the sake of reference, the diameter of the moon is only 2,160 miles. This means that the Heavenly City will be even larger than our current moon orbiting the earth, in the night sky!
- **Because of its enormous size, many physicists believe that the Law of Gravity may not affect New Jerusalem in the way it does objects today.** Since anything with a diameter of over 300 km naturally collapses into the shape of a sphere, this apparently won't be the case for the Heavenly City, which maintains the shape of a perfect cube.
- **This is interesting, since the "Holy of Holies" in the Old Testament Tabernacle was also a perfect cube in its dimensions: 10 x 10 x 10 cubits.** (Read Exodus 25-26) This is very significant, since the "Holy of Holies" was where the LORD met Moses face to face, and spoke with him in intimate communion. In the New Jerusalem, we too will see the LORD face to face, speak with Him intimately, and serve Him faithfully ... for all of eternity! (Read Rev 22:4)

"Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel."

- **John describes for us that the city has a wall that is 144 cubits high.** Interesting, since 12 x 12 equals 144, and 12 is an important number in the Bible (*12 tribes, 12 apostles, 12 gates, 12 foundations*). With a little calculation, we can figure out how high this wall will be in modern measurements:
 - [Height of the Wall of New Jerusalem \(short cubit\):](#)
 - 1 cubit = 17.5 inches
 - 144 cubits = 2,520 inches = 210 feet high
 - [Height of the Wall of New Jerusalem \(long cubit\):](#)
 - 1 cubit = 20.4 inches
 - 144 cubits = 2,937.6 inches = 244.8 feet high
- New Jerusalem will be somewhere between 210 feet high, or about 245 feet high. Either way, the impressive wall surrounding this massive City will be over 20 stories high!

- **John tells us it will be constructed out of jasper stone, which has a deep reddish color.** This is due to high amounts of iron inside jasper. It's also closely related to another type of rock called a "**bloodstone**", both of which were worn by Christians in the early church, as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross.
 - *Jasper is also mentioned as the twelfth and last stone on the breastplate of the High Priest in the Old Testament in Exodus 28:20*
- **It seems the wall of New Jerusalem will be a deep blood-red color.** As such, this massive structure will remind us for all eternity that *it is the Blood of the Lamb, that protects us and shields us, from sin and destruction.* For countless future ages, the saints will gaze upon the wall of this city, as an immovable *testimony and permanent reminder of the sacrifice of the King,* on their behalf! (Read John 15:13)

"The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass."

- **We are told that the city itself will be constructed of pure gold, as clear as glass.** Gold, in the ancient world, was understood to be the metal of kings and royalty, and today is still one of the most valuable substances on earth. How fitting then, that the New Jerusalem would be built out of it, as the Great King will dwell there, and the saints will rule at His side, as lesser kings and queens throughout all of eternity! It's interesting that John describes the gold being as clear as glass.
- **Interestingly, with modern technology, we have the ability to create ultra-thin and transparent sheets of gold.** Thin gold sheets display some unusual characteristics. When processed in ultra-thin sheets, gold becomes transparent. It allows green light waves to pass through, while reflecting infrared light. Windows coated with gold allow light to enter, but all the while reflecting heat. Therefore, many cockpit windows of modern aircraft are coated with gold, as well as the windows of office buildings, in order to take advantage of these unique properties. Whatever the case, we know that this Heavenly City will be one that is made of pure gold, as clear as glass, allowing the glory of the light of God to shine through it;

"The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst."

- **The foundation of the Heavenly Capital will be marvelously colored with these 12 beautiful stones.** There is a strong connection between these "Foundation Stones" and the 12 stones of the High Priest's breastplate, as described in Exodus 25-26. Much could be gleaned from these verses, by examining and comparing the stone types and their individual meaning. We won't take the time to do it here, but I would encourage you to do so, in your own personal study. (2 Tim 2:15)

"The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass."

- **Each of the gates of New Jerusalem will be made of a single, enormous pearl!** I'm sure that the beauty of these gates, and their immense size, will be a wonderful sight to behold, as we enter the Heavenly Capital for the first time!
- **Not only are pearls extremely valuable, but they're also made through an interesting process.** When a small irritant (such as a pebble or grain of sand) becomes lodged inside of an oyster, it's coated again and again with a special chemical called "nacre", also known as "mother of pearl". This object is then rounded continually inside the oyster through rubbing against the inner shell. Eventually, this elaborate process produces a precious and beautiful pearl, often of gem-like quality. In a very real sense, the oyster takes something negative, irritating, and painful, and turns it into something positive, lovely, and valuable.

- This is a beautiful metaphor of how the Lord will use trials, suffering, and pain in the life of every believer, and ultimately turn it into something good and beneficial, when they arrive in Heaven. Scripture promises that all of our experiences and situations in this life, no matter how difficult or painful, will ultimately be turned into a thing of beauty and joy, by the time we enter the pearly gates of New Jerusalem! (Rom 8:28; Gen 50:20)

The **MAGNIFICENCE** of God's City (v.22-27) - *"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 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. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 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."*

- *"I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple."* - Here, the temple was not removed, but expanded. Everything and every place is holy and the dwelling place of God. Remember, that before Jesus the temple was a prophecy from GOD. In the Christian the "temple" is the people of GOD. In the Millennium, the temple will be a memorial place to GOD. But in the Eternal Heavens, the temple are the Persons of GOD!!
 - *"The inhabitants need no place of worship or sacrifice, the object of all worship being present, and the great sacrifice Himself being there." - Alford*
- *"..the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it."*
- *"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."*
 - *"The exhortation warns present readers that the only way to participate in the future city is to turn one's loyalties to the Lamb now." - Johnson*