

The Commencement of Eternity
“THE DESCRIPTION OF HEAVEN”
Revelation 21:9-27

Theme: The primary feature of Heaven is the unrestricted access to the glory of the Lord.

I. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY – 21:9-11

A. *The Delight of the City* – vv. 9-10

1. One of the interesting details in this account is that *“one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me...”* – a possible reference to the same angel who announced the contrasting city of Babylon that was destroyed – cp. Revelation 17:1
2. The invitation was for John to *“come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”*
 - a. *“the bride”* – originally refers to the Church – cp. Revelation 19:6
 - b. *“the wife of the Lamb”* – is now the appropriate reference because the Marriage Supper of the Lamb has already happened and the marriage is consummated.
 - c. It is best to recognize this reference in a sense wherein *“the wife of the Lamb”* refers to all of the people of God – not merely the church. It is a form of metonymy.
3. This angel *“carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.”* – a reference to the fulfillment of Jesus promise of a place prepared for the believer – cp. John 14:2
4. John is given the ability to see the city from afar – from *“a great and high mountain”* so that the resplendent beauty might be appreciated before he was taken inside the city walls themselves.
5. It is apparent in the reference to the city as representing the *“wife of the Lamb”* that much care and gratification existed in the work of God in preparing this heavenly home.

B. *The Description of the City* – v. 11

1. It is important to point out that John actually saw the city and has to try to accurately portray it in words.
2. The prevailing feature is that it is *“having the glory of God”* – a reference to the indescribable radiance of the sum of all of God’s attributes – cp. Exodus 33:18-19

3. Then he attempts to portray that glory: it is brilliant and crystal clear in radiance: *“Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal clear jasper”* – cp. *Revelation 4:3*
4. *“crystal clear jasper”* – refers not to the modern jasper, but is best understood as referring to the diamond – a huge, flawless, refracting diamond placing the glory of God in radiant display in full color.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WALLS – *21:12-21*











A. *The Memorials in the Walls* – *vv. 12-14*

1. The walls are said to embody characteristics which are designed to remind them of the spiritual heritage of Israel – *“It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.”*
 - a. The *“twelve angels”* represent the fact that the angelic servants of God will constantly be available to serve both the glory of God and the saints in their activities.
 - b. The *“names [that] were written on them”* provide a memorial to *“the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel”* – as a demonstration of the fact that Israel belongs here – cp. the Millennial Temple - *Ezekiel 48:30-35*.
 - c. These gates are clearly arranged in a manner that reminds us of the ordering of the tribes around the Wilderness Tabernacle – *“There were three gates on the east and three on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west”* – *Numbers 2*
2. However, the walls also provided a reference to the spiritual heritage of the Church – *“And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”*
3. We're later told that the walls are made of jasper – thus, they are crystal clear and one will be able to see above the gates *“the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel”* and below the gates in the foundation *“the twelve names of the apostles of the Lamb.”*
4. The walls' gates and foundations demonstrate the grace of God that enabled all the people of God – Israel and the church – to gain eternal life.

B. *The Magnificence of the Walls* – *vv. 15-21*

1. Two things are emphasized in relation to the walls – the size and beauty.
2. One of the ways that we know that this is to be interpreted literally and not figuratively is that you don't measure a symbol – *“The one who spoke with me*

had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.”

3. He then describes the city – *“The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles;”*
4. This area of 1,500 miles would span roughly from Maine to Florida cubed!
 - a. Only squared we would see about 2.25 million square miles.
 - b. Given comfortable population densities, the New Jerusalem would be able to house approximately 100 billion people!
 - c. And this is before it is cubed – no wonder John describes the saints as a innumerable multitude – cp. *Revelation 7:9*
5. It is a massive cube – *“its length and width and height are equal”* – providing plenty of room for all of the redeemed.
6. To insure that we understood this literally and not symbolically, *“And he measured its wall seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements”* – the thickness is to be understood literally.
7. They are also of dazzling beauty, with nothing that will permit any shadows – *“The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.”*
8. The *“foundations stones”* on which the names of the apostles were written are further described as possessing unparalleled beauty as adorned by precious stones of every conceivable color – *“The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone.”*
 - a. Diamond – *“the first foundation stone was jasper”* 
 - b. Brilliant blue – *“the second, sapphire”* 
 - c. Sky blue with colored stripes – *“the third, chalcedony”* 
 - d. Bright green – *“the fourth, emerald”* 
 - e. Red and white stripes – *“the fifth, sardonyx”* 
 - f. Red – *“the sixth, sardius”* 
 - g. Green/Yellow – *“the seventh, chrysolite”* 
 - h. Yellow – *“the eighth, beryl”* 
 - i. Yellow/Green – *“the ninth, topaz”* 
 - j. Gold tinted green – *“the tenth, chrysoprase”* 

k. Violet – *“the eleventh, jacinth”* 

l. Purple – *“the twelfth, amethyst”* 

9. The gates that bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were giant pearls – *“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl.”*²

10. Again, the purity and transparency of everything in Heaven is demonstrated – *“And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.”* – there was nothing that would cast shadows and God’s glory was free to blaze unhindered in all directions.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF THE LAMB – *21:22-27*

A. *The “Shekinah” of the Lamb* – *vv. 22-24*

1. John is now brought within the city and immediately recognizes that there is no Temple – *“I saw no temple in it”*
2. He immediately realizes why – since the glory of God pervades everything, there is not need to “go” to a place where He will be worshipped – *“for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.”*
3. The glory of the Lord replacing the sun & moon since the light will come constantly and unhindered from the glory of God – thus, the saints will never be out of His presence and we will practice the presence of God in perfect and unhindered worship in everything that we will do - cp. *Exodus 24:17; 34:29; Isaiah 60:19-20; Luke 2:9; 9:29ff*
4. The glory of the Lamb is said to be the light that *“the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it”* – meaning that there is total equality of access and surrender to the glories of Christ. –

B. *The Society of the Lamb* – *vv. 25-27*

1. This glory (the sum of all of the attributes of God) will be the key attraction to all men – great and small – *“In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.”*
2. This city will be totally secure – without external threat since the glory of God has vanquished any and all competitors.
3. John, being the Evangelist his is, takes one more opportunity to emphasize the

² This is a possible analogy of the suffering that Christ who is the “door” or “gate” had to endure for our freedom to enter Heaven; even as a oyster dealt with the imperfections by creating the pearl.

An Exposition of The Revelation

importance of our name in the book – *“and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*