

Revelation 21:9-23 The New Heavens and New Earth

Verse 9

One of the seven angels...spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." Perhaps this is the same angel that spoke to John in 17:1. In that passage Babylon is called the "great harlot." Here, in contrast, the New Jerusalem is called the "bride, the wife of the Lamb." Clearly a city is being referred to that, by makeup of those who dwell in it, is called the bride of Christ.

Verse 10

And He 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.

From a high vantage point, John recaps what he saw in verse 2.

"That the city comes down from God means that the eternal blessedness is not an achievement of man but a gift from God." Mounce

Verse 11

Having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. The city shone in the splendor of God Himself. (Note Exodus 40:24, 1 Kings 8:11, Isaiah 24:23, 60:1). The costly stone would be what we would call a diamond. This stone is used to describe God Himself in Revelation 4:3. The brilliance of the city is a reflection of God's presence in the city.

Verse 12

A great and high wall – Denoting security.

With twelve gates... with names written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel – The many gates suggest great freedom of access.

Israel will have a distinct identity and role in this city.

Twelve angels – Another picture of great security. In Gen. 3:24 an angel turned man away from Eden. Now angels will welcome man into the New Jerusalem.

Verse 13

Three gates on the east...north...south...west – Geographical directions still exist in the new creation. Physical space and time continue to exist throughout eternity. Nowhere here are we told which names will be on which gates. However they may correspond to the names on the gates of the Millennial temple, described in Ezekiel 48:31-35.

Verse 14

Twelve foundation stones – Abraham was looking for this city with foundations from God (Hebrews 11:10). This denotes a permanent dwelling place for the righteous.

On them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb – Assigning which apostles and whose name is associated with each foundation stone is impossible at this time.

Twelve gates – Israel. *Twelve foundation stones* – The Church.

Notice the distinction between *Israel* and the *church* even in the eternal state. God had a distinct role for each group and a separate identity, one

from the other. This distinction clearly indicates that the church did not replace Israel in the plans of God.

Verses 15-17 – The Measurements of the City

A gold measuring rod – This angelic measuring rod speaks of the dignity of the measuring task. Notice in verse 17 that angelic and human measurements are the same, at least at this time in the New Jerusalem.

The city is laid out as a square – "...*fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.*" Some understand the city to be a cube, others think it slopes in toward the top, like a pyramid.

Verses 18-21 – The Description of the City

And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards...and the material of the wall was jasper – The thickness of the wall indicates security and yet it appears to be clear like glass so that the light of the glory of God can radiate through it.

The foundation stones...

1 *Jasper* – Normally brownish red (21:11 - clear)

2 *Sapphire* – Similar to a diamond, blue in color

3 *Chalcedony* – Sky blue with stripes of other colors

4 *Emerald* – Bright green in color

5 *Sardonyx* – Red and white in color

6 *Sardius* – Reddish color

7 *Chrysolite* – Golden in color (or pale-green)

8 *Beryl* – Sea green color

9 *Topaz* – Yellow green and transparent color

10 *Chrysoprase* – Greenish golden color

11 *Jacinth* – Violet to orange color

12 *Amethyst* – Purple color

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls – Pearls were ranked the highest among precious stones at that time because no human workmanship could improve them.

And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass – Old Testament priests walked on a golden floor in Solomon's temple.

Verse 22 – The Description of the City

And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple – In a sense, the whole city is a virtual temple because God and the Lamb are there. The earthly tabernacle and temple were symbols of the presence of God with man. In the New Jerusalem His presence is a reality.

Verse 23 – The Description of the City

And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it – It does not say there is no longer a sun or moon, only that the city has no need of them.

The glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb – Jesus declared that He was the Light of the world (John 8:12, 12:36). John declares that God is light and in Him there is no darkness (1 John 1:5-7). True fellowship with God is now a reality.