

## LESSON 5

# The Beauty of the Heavenly City

## Revelation 21-22

---

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away, Revelation 21:1-4.*

---

**Class Overview:** Revelation 21–22 gives us a breathtaking vision of heaven as the New Jerusalem, the holy city shining with God's glory. Its jeweled walls, golden streets, radiant light, and flowing river symbolize the perfection, purity, and eternal provision of God's dwelling with His people. Yet the true beauty of the city is not in its materials but in the presence of God and the Lamb, who are its temple and its light. This lesson helps us see that heaven is the fulfillment of every longing of the soul—security, fellowship, joy, and eternal life in God's presence.

### Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain how the beauty of heaven reflects the glory of God rather than mere material splendor.
  2. Identify the symbolic meaning of the gates, foundations, walls, and streets in Revelation 21–22.
  3. Connect the imagery of heaven to God's past promises (Eden, the tabernacle, the temple) and their fulfillment in Christ.
  4. Apply the hope of heaven to daily life by seeing how it shapes our endurance, purity, and priorities on earth.
  5. Express personal confidence and longing for heaven as the soul's eternal home in God's presence.
- 

## Introduction:

When John was exiled on Patmos, God pulled back the curtain and showed him a vision of heaven. Revelation 21 and 22 describe the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. The Spirit doesn't just tell John what heaven will be like in abstract terms. Instead, he is shown vivid images, full of beauty and splendor, that ignite our imagination and fill our hearts with hope.

Why describe heaven this way? Because beauty speaks to the soul. From the beginning of time, God has made beauty a mark of His creation. The heavens declare His glory, the earth is filled with His wonders, and the psalmist often sang of the majesty of God's handiwork. Yet, as glorious as creation is, it is only a shadow of what is to come. The beauty John saw is not temporary, fading, or corruptible; it is eternal.

In this lesson, we walk with John as he describes the brilliance of the heavenly city. Its radiance is like a rare jewel, clear as crystal. Its walls are made of jasper, its foundations decorated with precious stones, and its gates are of pearl. Even the streets are paved with pure gold, like transparent glass. But beyond the stunning imagery, the true beauty of heaven lies in what these images point to: God's presence, His glory, and His redeemed people gathered forever in perfect fellowship.

When we hold this vision, our outlook on life shifts, and struggles seem lighter compared to the eternal glory awaiting us. Temptations become less tempting when our focus is on the unmatched beauty of heaven. And discouragement diminishes when we remember that God has prepared a city whose brilliance can never be dimmed.

This is the home of the soul. This is the inheritance reserved for the faithful. And this is why we long for the city whose builder and maker is God.

## The Radiance of God's Glory (21:9-11)

*Then one of the seven angels, who had held the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me: "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." He then carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, arrayed with God's glory. Her radiance was like a precious jewel, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, Revelation 21:9-11.*

### From the Text

#### A. The City is From God

- John doesn't see a city built by men, but one descending from heaven.
- Hebrews 11:10 says Abraham looked forward to a city with foundations, "whose architect and builder is God."
- The beauty is not man-made: it is divine, perfect, eternal.

#### B. The Glory That Defines the City

- The word John uses is *doxa*—the **weight, brightness, and majesty** of God.
- The glory of God has always been radiant:
  - Moses' face shone after meeting with God (Exodus 34:29-35).
  - The temple was filled with His glory so the priests could not stand to minister (1 Kings 8:10-11).
  - Jesus revealed His glory at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2).
- In heaven, God's glory does not just appear occasionally—it saturates the entire city.

#### C. The Jasper Stone Imagery

- Jasper is described as “clear as crystal,” suggesting diamond-like brilliance.
- Light refracting through such a stone produces colors, sparkle, and beauty that words cannot capture.
- John is straining to describe something far beyond human experience. The beauty of heaven transcends earthly categories.

#### **D. Theological Meaning**

- The true beauty of heaven is not in material descriptions, but in what they symbolize: **God’s presence unhindered and unveiled.**
- Psalm 27:4: *“I have asked one thing from the Lord... to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and seek Him in His temple.”*
- The heavenly city is the ultimate fulfillment of that longing to live forever in the unfiltered glory of God.

#### **Application:**

- The most beautiful part of heaven is not the gold or jewels, but God Himself.
- Our lives today should be oriented toward His glory: seeking Him as our greatest treasure.
- When the church gathers, we get a small foretaste of that beauty: His presence among His people, His word illuminating our hearts, His Spirit at work in us.

### **The Foundations and Gates of the City (21:12-21)**

*It had a massive high wall with twelve gates; twelve angels were at the gates. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were inscribed on the gates... The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb were on the foundations, Revelation 21:12-14.*

#### **From the Text**

##### **A. The Gates of the City (v. 12-13, 21a)**

- Twelve gates, guarded by angels, bearing the names of the tribes of Israel.
- This imagery connects the Old and New Testaments: God’s people of all ages are included. Israel points to the root of faith, the apostles to the foundation of the church. Together, they show the unity of God’s people in heaven.
- Gates face every direction (east, north, south, west), reminding us of the worldwide scope of salvation; people from every nation and tribe are invited into the city (Revelation 7:9).
- Each gate is a single pearl (v. 21). Pearls are formed through suffering. This may remind us that entrance into heaven came at a significant cost, the suffering of Christ.

##### **B. The Walls and Foundations (vv. 14, 19-20)**

- The city has massive walls, not to keep people out, but to display permanence, strength, and beauty.
- The twelve foundations bear the names of the apostles, reminding us that the church is built on “the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20).
- The foundations are decorated with every kind of precious stone—jasper, sapphire, emerald, amethyst, and more. Each stone shines with unique beauty, symbolizing the variety and richness of God’s glory reflected in His people.

### **C. Symbolism of Twelve**

- “Twelve” is the number of God’s people throughout Scripture: 12 tribes of Israel, 12 apostles, 12 gates, 12 foundations.
- The city is perfectly complete, encompassing all of God’s redeemed. Nothing is missing, nothing is left out.

### **Application**

- The gates remind us that heaven is open to all who come through Christ. No one is excluded by background, race, or past sins.
- The foundations remind us of the certainty of our hope. Our faith rests on God’s promises revealed through His apostles and sealed in Christ.
- The beauty of the jeweled walls teaches us that every believer is a part of this eternal city, unique, valued, and radiant with God’s glory.

## **The Golden City and Its Perfection (21:15-21)**

*“The one who spoke with me had a golden measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out in a square; its length, width, and height are equal,”* Revelation 21:15-16.

### **From the Text**

#### **A. The Perfect Measurements**

- The angel measures the city with a golden rod. The symbolism is striking; gold is the measure of heaven.
- The city is a perfect cube: length, width, and height are equal (12,000 stadia, about 1,400 miles each way).
- This mirrors the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and temple (1 Kings 6:20), which was also a cube. In heaven, the entire city is the Holy of Holies. God dwells with His people fully and forever.

#### **B. The Walls and Materials**

- The wall is 144 cubits thick (about 72 yards), strong, secure, and beyond assault.
- Materials emphasize splendor:
  - Walls of jasper (v. 18)
  - City of pure gold, “as clear as glass” (v. 18)
  - Streets of pure gold, “transparent as glass” (v. 21)
- Gold here isn’t like earthly gold. John emphasizes transparency, purity and perfection in every part of the city.

### **C. Theological Meaning**

- Heaven’s perfection means there will be no flaw, no corruption, no weakness. Everything reflects the holiness and purity of God.
- The cubic design shows that heaven is not just a place where God dwells, it is God’s dwelling extended to include His people. We will live in His presence continually.

### **Application**

- The perfection of the city reassures us of our secure hope. God has measured and prepared it. Nothing will be lacking.
- Earthly wealth and splendor fade, but the riches of heaven are incorruptible. Jesus said, “Don’t store up for yourselves treasures on earth... but store up treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19–20).
- The golden city calls us to live as citizens of heaven now, seeking purity, holiness, and security in Christ, not in this world.

## **The Light of the City: God Himself (21:22-27)**

*I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb,*  
Revelation 21:22-23.

### **From the Text**

#### **A. No Temple Needed**

- In ancient Jerusalem, the temple was central. It was the meeting place between God and His people.
- In heaven, there is no need for a temple because God’s presence fills everything. The Lord and the Lamb themselves are the temple.
- This fulfills what Jesus promised in John 4:23-24, that true worshipers worship the Father in spirit and truth, not in a location.

## B. The Glory as Light

- Heaven has no sun or moon. God's glory illuminates the city, and Christ is its lamp.
- Isaiah 60:19-20 anticipated this: *"The sun will no longer be your light by day... the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning will be over."*
- Light represents truth, purity, joy, and life. Darkness is gone forever.

## C. The Nations and Security

- "The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it" (v. 24). This shows the universality of salvation; people from every tribe and tongue are gathered.
- Gates never close (v. 25). There is no night, no threat, no danger. Eternal safety is guaranteed.
- Nothing unclean enters (v. 27). Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will share in this light.

## Application

- The most incredible beauty of heaven is God Himself. His glory gives light, His Son shines as the lamp. Everything centers on Him.
- Today we walk by faith, not by sight. In heaven, faith gives way to sight—we will live in the unveiled glory of God.
- This hope calls us to holiness now: to live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8-9) and to seek purity, knowing that nothing unclean will enter that city.

## The River and the Tree of Life: Eternal Provision (22:1-5)

*Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit... The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, Revelation 22:1-2.*

## From the Text

### A. The River of Life

- John sees a crystal-clear river flowing from God's throne.
- Rivers in Scripture often symbolize blessing and life (Psalm 46:4; Ezekiel 47:1-12).
- This river shows that life in heaven flows directly from God. He is the source of eternal refreshment, joy, and vitality.

### B. The Tree of Life

- First seen in Eden (Genesis 2:9), the tree of life reappears here, showing that God's purpose from the beginning is fulfilled in Christ.

- It bears twelve kinds of fruit, yielding fruit every month. This represents abundance, variety, and continual provision. There is no lack, no hunger, no withering.
- The leaves are for the healing of the nations, symbolizing complete restoration, the removal of the curse, and perfect harmony among God's people.

### **C. The Throne and His Servants**

- God's throne is central. His servants will worship Him, see His face, and have His name on their foreheads.
- To "see His face" fulfills the deepest longing of humanity (Exodus 33:20). In heaven, that longing is satisfied, we will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).
- His name on our foreheads marks us as His forever, perfect belonging, identity, and security.

### **D. No More Night**

- The vision concludes: "Night will be no more... they will reign forever and ever" (v. 5).
- Night, in Scripture, represents fear, uncertainty, danger, and sin. All of that is gone. Eternal day has dawned.

### ***Application***

- The beauty of heaven is not just in its appearance, but in its provision: eternal life, continual joy, perfect restoration, and unbroken fellowship with God.
- For every wound we've suffered, every tear we've shed, every weakness we've carried, heaven promises complete healing and renewal.
- The river and tree remind us that God's beauty is not static; it is living, abundant, and satisfying forever.

## **Conclusion**

John's vision of heaven in Revelation 21-22 was given to strengthen weary Christians. They lived in a world of persecution, fear, and uncertainty. God showed them what was coming, not to satisfy curiosity, but to anchor their hope.


The beauty of the heavenly city is more than dazzling walls, radiant jewels, or streets of gold. Those images remind us of something more profound: God's presence, God's people, and God's glory, shining in perfect harmony forever. Every description points to the truth that heaven is complete, secure, and radiant because God Himself is there.


This vision calls us to lift our eyes above the brokenness of this world. When trials press hard, we remember the city with foundations whose builder is God. When temptation lures us, we remember the purity of the golden city. When fear rises, we remember the gates that never close and the light that never fades.


One day, faith will give way to sight. We will drink from the river of life, eat from the tree of life, and see His face. And in that moment, we will know that every sacrifice, every hardship, and every tear was worth it. That is the beauty of the heavenly city.


## For Discussion

1. John begins his vision by describing the radiance of the city as the glory of God (Rev. 21:11). Why is God's presence the ultimate source of beauty, and how should that truth shape our priorities now?


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_

2. The city's gates bear the names of the tribes of Israel, and its foundations the names of the apostles (Rev. 21:12–14). What does this teach us about the unity of God's people across all ages?


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_

3. The city is measured as a perfect cube, echoing the Most Holy Place in the temple (Rev. 21:16). What does this tell us about God's desire for fellowship with His people?

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_


4. Revelation 21:27 says nothing unclean will enter the city. How does that challenge us to live as "children of light" while we wait for heaven?

 \_\_\_\_\_





 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_


 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Revelation 22:4 promises that God's servants will see His face. What does that hope mean to you personally, and how can it strengthen you during times of trial?

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_