

Isaiah Wilson / General Adult

Revelation / Revelation 21:9–21

Introduction

Last week we heard a declaration. A voice from the throne told us what God was doing. All things new. Death, mourning, crying, and pain gone. God himself dwelling with his people forever.

This week we see it.

Verse 9 marks a shift in the vision. One of the seven angels who held one of the seven bowls, the same bowls we sat with earlier in this study when God poured out his final judgments on a rebellious world, now becomes John's guide. The angel who administered wrath now becomes the one who reveals glory. And what he tells John he is about to show him is not a city.

He says: come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

Then he takes John to a high mountain, and what John sees is a city.

A bride and a city in the same breath, describing the same reality. That is not a contradiction to untangle. It is the key that unlocks everything we are about to walk through. Every gate, every foundation stone, every measurement in the passage in front of us is not architecture for its own sake. It is a description of the redeemed people of God, dressed and prepared, presented to the Lamb who purchased them.

Revelation 21:9–21 BSB

⁹ Then one of the seven angels with the seven bowls full of the seven final plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

¹¹ shining with the glory of God. Its radiance was like a most precious jewel, like a jasper, as clear as crystal.

¹² The city had a great and high wall with twelve gates inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and twelve angels at the gates.

¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west.

¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The angel who spoke with me had a golden measuring rod to measure the city and its gates and walls.

¹⁶ The city lies foursquare, with its width the same as its length. And he measured the city with the rod, and all its dimensions were equal—12,000 stadia in length and width and height.

¹⁷ And he measured its wall to be 144 cubits, by the human measure the angel was using.

¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city itself of pure gold, as pure as glass.

¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were adorned with every kind of precious stone: The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, with each gate consisting of a single pearl. The main street of the city was pure gold, as clear as glass.

The Bride and the City

Revelation 21:9–11 BSB

⁹ Then one of the seven angels with the seven bowls full of the seven final plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

¹¹ shining with the glory of God. Its radiance was like a most precious jewel, like a jasper, as clear as crystal.

V.9 — Come, I Will Show You the Bride

The angel who speaks to John here is not a stranger to this story. He is one of the seven angels who held one of the seven bowls of God's final judgment. Earlier in this study we sat with those bowls one at a time. Plagues on the earth. Plagues on the sea. Darkness. Blood. The final collapse of Babylon. Those were the instruments of wrath poured out on a world in rebellion.

That same angel is now the one showing John glory.

There is something worth sitting with in that. The angel who administered judgment is the same one who reveals what the judgment was making room for. Wrath and glory are not opposites operating on separate tracks. The judgment cleared the ground. What follows is what gets built on it.

The angel tells John: come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

That language completes something. Several chapters ago, we watched heaven announce the marriage supper of the Lamb. The bride had made herself ready, and her fine linen was described as the righteous acts of the saints. That was the announcement. This is where we finally see her.

And here is what makes verse 9 and verse 10 work together as one unit. The angel says he will show John a bride. Then he takes John to a mountain, and what John actually sees is a city.

A bride and a city, in the same breath, describing the same thing.

This is not confusion in the vision. It is the entire key to reading everything that follows. The New Jerusalem is not a location the redeemed will one day travel to and take up residence in, the way a person moves to a new address. The city is the people. Every gate, every foundation, every measurement about to be described is a description of the redeemed community of God, dressed and prepared, presented to the Lamb who purchased her with his own blood.

V.10 — The High Mountain

Revelation 21:10 BSB

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

John is carried away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain.

This detail is not incidental, and it connects to something that reaches back centuries before John ever wrote a word.

In Ezekiel chapter 40, the prophet Ezekiel is also carried, in visions of God, to a high mountain, and shown a city. An angelic figure meets him there with a measuring reed and walks him through a detailed, structured vision of a restored temple and city. The parallel between Ezekiel's experience and John's experience is not coincidental. John is deliberately writing in a way that tells his readers: what you are about to see answers what Ezekiel saw hundreds of years earlier. Ezekiel's vision was pointing toward something. John is watching that something arrive.

Mountains carry this kind of weight throughout Scripture. God gave the law to Moses on a mountain. God chose a mountain, Zion, as the place his temple would stand. Jesus was transfigured in glory on a mountain. Mountains are consistently the place in Scripture where heaven and earth meet, where God's presence and human experience come into direct contact. It is fitting that this vision, showing the fullest and final meeting of God with his people, is shown from a mountain.

And the direction of the vision matters as much as it did in verse 2. The city comes down out of heaven from God. Heaven is not a place his people ascend to and leave earth behind. Heaven comes to earth. God brings his dwelling down to where his people are.

V.11 — The Glory

Revelation 21:11 BSB

¹¹ shining with the glory of God. Its radiance was like a most precious jewel, like a jasper, as clear as crystal.

John describes what he sees. The city has the glory of God. Its radiance is like a most precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

The glory of God is not atmosphere or mood lighting. It is God's own presence, visibly manifest. And what John is telling us here is that this glory functions as the city's light source. We are going to see that made explicit later in the chapter, when we are told the city has no need of the sun, because the glory of God is what lights it. Verse 11 sets that up in advance.

The comparison to jasper is worth developing fully, because it reaches back to something taught much earlier in this series and deserves a complete explanation.

When this study covered Revelation chapter 4, the throne room of heaven, we looked at a description of God's own appearance, seated on his throne, described as having the appearance of jasper and carnelian. At that time, we traced those two stones back to Exodus chapter 28, the instructions for the high priest's breastplate. The high priest of Israel wore a breastplate set with twelve precious stones, one for each of the twelve tribes, and he carried those stones into the presence of God whenever he entered the tabernacle to minister on Israel's behalf. Jasper and carnelian were two of those twelve stones.

That connection, made months ago in this study, was pointing toward something we had not yet reached. We are reaching it now.

Jasper appears again here in verse 11, describing the radiance of the entire city. And when we come to verses 19 and 20 later in this passage, we are going to see all twelve of the breastplate stones appear again, forming the literal foundations of the New Jerusalem. What was true of the throne of God in chapter 4 is now true of the whole city in chapter 21. The connection to Israel's priesthood is not decorative. It is structural. The direction of Scripture's priesthood theme moves from restricted (OT) to representative (Christ) to universal (Here). The whole city is a holy of holies!

The description of jasper as clear as crystal also matters. In the ancient world, the highest quality jasper was known for exceptional clarity, closer to what we would think of today as a diamond or clear quartz than the more opaque stone commonly called jasper now. John is describing something of the highest possible purity and value. Nothing clouded. Nothing obscured. The glory radiating from this city is unmixed and complete.

The Walls and Gates

Revelation 21:12–13 BSB

¹² The city had a great and high wall with twelve gates inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and twelve angels at the gates.

¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west.

Vv.12-13 — Twelve Gates, Twelve Tribes

John describes a great, high wall around the city, with twelve gates set into it. An angel stands at each gate. And written on each gate is the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

This detail is not new information appearing for the first time. It has actually been waiting in this study for a while.

Several months ago, when we studied the sealing of the 144,000 in Revelation chapter 7, this fact was mentioned in passing. We noted that the number 144,000 comes from twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes, and that twelve, multiplied by itself, produces the number of completeness that runs through the rest of Revelation. At that time, it was pointed out that the New Jerusalem has twelve gates and twelve foundations, as a forward glance at a passage we had not yet reached.

We are at that passage now.

Twelve gates. Twelve tribes. Every person entering this city passes through a gate bearing the name of one of the tribes of Israel. That is not incidental decoration. It is a structural statement about who this city belongs to and where its foundation lies.

This raises a question worth addressing directly. Does naming the gates after the twelve tribes of Israel mean Gentile believers are somehow secondary citizens of this city, entering through a structure that technically belongs to someone else?

The rest of Scripture answers that question clearly. Paul makes this point directly in Galatians, where he writes that there is neither Jew nor Greek, for all are one in Christ Jesus, and that if you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. The tribes on the gates are not excluding anyone who belongs to Jesus. They are establishing the covenant foundation the entire city is built on. Every believer, Jew or Gentile, enters through gates that carry the name of God's original covenant people, because the story of redemption did not start over at the cross. It arrived at its intended destination.

The arrangement of the gates is also worth noticing. Three gates face east. Three face north. Three face south. Three face west. Every direction is represented equally. No side of the city is favored over another, and no person approaching from any direction is left without a way in.

This arrangement has a distant echo in the way Israel camped around the tabernacle during the wilderness years. The twelve tribes were arranged in formation around the tabernacle, three tribes to a side, with God's presence dwelling at the center and his people surrounding him on every side. The New Jerusalem takes that same picture and makes it permanent. God is not simply at the center of a temporary camp anymore. His presence is now what the entire city is built around, and the same twelve-tribe structure that once surrounded a tent in the wilderness is now built into the very walls of the eternal dwelling place of God with man.

That is a thread worth connecting to something from last week's teaching. We traced the movement of God's dwelling with his people from the garden, to the tabernacle, to the temple, to the incarnation, to the indwelling Spirit, and finally to the complete and permanent presence described in chapter 21 verse 3. The gates of the New Jerusalem, arranged exactly the way Israel once arranged itself around the tabernacle in the wilderness, show that this movement was never abandoning the pattern God established at Sinai. It was building toward the moment when that pattern would become permanent and complete.

Twelve gates. Twelve tribes. No side of the city without an entrance. And a structure that has been forming since the wilderness, only now finished.

The Foundations

Revelation 21:14 BSB

¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

V.14 — Twelve Foundations, Twelve Apostles

Where the gates carried the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve foundations of the city's wall carry the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Put this together with what we just saw in verses 12 and 13. Gates for the tribes. Foundations for the apostles. Old covenant and new covenant, not two separate stories running side by side, but one structure. You cannot remove either half without the city collapsing. The tribes and the apostles are both load-bearing.

It is worth being precise about which apostles this verse has in mind, because our own church holds a specific position on this that matters here. Hope City teaches that the apostolic gift is still active today, that God still calls and equips people to plant churches and advance the

gospel in a pioneering way. That is a real and ongoing gift in the body of Christ. But that is not what Revelation 21:14 is describing. This verse points to the original Twelve, the specific men who walked with Jesus, watched him die, and were commissioned by him after the resurrection. Their names are written into the foundation because their role was a one-time, unrepeatable act of laying a foundation, not an office that continues to be laid again in every generation. A foundation is only poured once. Everything built afterward rests on it, but it does not need to be repoured.

Paul describes this exact reality in Ephesians. He tells the believers there that they are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ himself as the cornerstone. Paul is not describing a future hope in that verse. He is describing a present reality for the church in his own day. What Paul says in the present tense about the church, John sees completed in the future as an actual structure. The apostles laid the foundation once, in history, through their eyewitness testimony to the resurrection and their commissioned authority from Christ. Every believer since then, in every generation, is built on top of that same foundation. Nothing added to it. Nothing needing to be relaid.

Jesus himself pointed toward this when he told Peter that he would build his church on the rock of the apostolic confession Peter had just made, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The foundation of the church was never going to be an ongoing series of new foundations poured in every generation. It was going to be one foundation, laid once, through the specific apostles Jesus himself commissioned, and every believer since then stands on it rather than beside it.

That is why the number in verse 14 is exactly twelve, matching the number of tribes in verse 12. The symmetry is not incidental. It is confirming, in the architecture itself, that the foundation of God's people is now complete in both directions. Twelve tribes established the covenant people in the old covenant. Twelve apostles established the covenant people in the new. Both belong to the same city. Both are permanently written into the same wall. And what stands on both of them, generation after generation, is one people, one city, one bride, prepared for one husband.

The Measuring

Revelation 21:15–17 BSB

¹⁵ The angel who spoke with me had a golden measuring rod to measure the city and its gates and walls.

¹⁶ The city lies foursquare, with its width the same as its length. And he measured the city with the rod, and all its dimensions were equal—12,000 stadia in length and width and height.

¹⁷ And he measured its wall to be 144 cubits, by the human measure the angel was using.

Vv.15-16 — The Cube

The angel measures the city with a golden rod. When we studied Revelation chapter 11, the measuring of the temple, we spent time in Ezekiel chapters 40 through 43, where an angelic figure appears to Ezekiel with a measuring reed and walks him through a detailed vision of a restored temple and city. At that time, we noted what measuring something formally means in the ancient world. It is not a neutral, administrative act like a surveyor checking property lines today. To measure something and declare its dimensions is to claim it. It marks the thing measured as belonging to someone, set apart, under ownership.

That same picture from Ezekiel appeared once already in this study, applied to the temple in [Revelation 11](#). It appears again here, applied to the entire New Jerusalem, and on a vastly larger scale. The angel measuring this city is a declaration: this belongs to God. Every dimension of it has been claimed by him.

And what the measurement reveals is remarkable. The city is 12,000 stadia in length, width, and height. All three dimensions equal. That works out to roughly 1,400 to 1,500 miles in every direction. This is not simply a large city. It is a perfect cube.

A perfect cube appears exactly one other time in all of Scripture. In 1 Kings chapter 6, when Solomon builds the temple, the innermost room, the holy of holies, is described with exact measurements: twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, twenty cubits high. A perfect cube.

That room was the single most restricted space in the entire Old Testament system. It housed the ark of the covenant and the visible presence of God. One person could enter it. The high priest. One day a year, on the Day of Atonement, and only after an elaborate process of purification and sacrifice that made it possible for a sinful man to survive being that close to a holy God.

The New Jerusalem is a holy of holies the size of a small continent.

Every square mile of this city carries the same category of sacred access that the ancient holy of holies carried in its twenty-cubit room. What was once reserved for one man, once a year, is now the permanent condition of the entire city, for every person who belongs to it, forever.

This connects directly to something we have already looked at earlier in this study, when we studied the tearing of the temple veil at the crucifixion. At the moment Jesus died, the curtain separating the holy of holies from the rest of the temple tore from top to bottom. That was not simply a dramatic sign. It was the beginning of exactly what we are now looking at in Revelation 21. The book of Hebrews tells us we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, through the curtain, that is, through his flesh. The veil tore so that access could open. And what began at the cross as an opened curtain reaches its completion here as an entire city built to the exact proportions of the room that curtain used to guard.

V.17 — The Wall

Revelation 21:17 BSB

¹⁷ And he measured its wall to be 144 cubits, by the human measure the angel was using.

The angel also measures the wall. 144 cubits.

That number is not arbitrary. Twelve, multiplied by itself, is the same pattern behind the 144,000 we studied in Revelation chapter 7. Twelve tribes, twelve apostles, and now a wall measured in the same number, multiplied again. The city's entire structure, gates, foundations, and now even its wall, is built out of the same number that represents God's complete and undiminished people.

John adds a small note here that is easy to miss but worth pointing out. He says the angel measured by human measurement. Whatever else is true about this city, its dimensions are not an abstraction beyond human comprehension. They are numbers a person can hold in their mind, scaled to something real, even while describing something that does not yet exist in the world we currently know.

The Materials

Revelation 21:18–21 BSB

¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city itself of pure gold, as pure as glass.

¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were adorned with every kind of precious stone: The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth

topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, with each gate consisting of a single pearl. The main street of the city was pure gold, as clear as glass.

V.18 — Jasper and Gold

The wall of the city is built of jasper, the same stone that described the city's glory back in verse 11. And the city itself is pure gold, clear as glass.

That last detail deserves a moment, because it does not describe anything that exists in the world as we currently know it. John is describing a material that shares the category of gold, its value, its association with glory and permanence, but operates according to different properties altogether. This connects directly to something taught last week, when we looked at the word *kainos*, meaning new in kind rather than simply new in time. The material itself is making the same theological claim the word *kainos* made. This is not an upgraded version of what already exists. It belongs to a different order of creation entirely.

Vv.19-20 — The Twelve Foundation Stones

Revelation 21:19–20 BSB

¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were adorned with every kind of precious stone: The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

²⁰ the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

Each of the twelve foundations of the city is adorned with a different precious stone: jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, carnelian, chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, and amethyst.

When we looked at jasper in verse 11, we traced it back to Revelation chapter 4, where God's own appearance on his throne was described using the language of jasper and carnelian, and we connected those two stones to the high priest's breastplate in Exodus chapter 28. That was a connection involving only two stones. Here, all twelve stones from that same breastplate appear together, forming the literal foundation of the eternal city.

In Exodus 28, God gives Moses detailed instructions for the garments the high priest was to wear when he ministered before the Lord. Among those garments was a breastplate set with

twelve precious stones, arranged in rows, one stone for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Every time the high priest entered the tabernacle to minister on Israel's behalf, he carried the names of all twelve tribes over his heart, literally set in stone, into the presence of God.

That single garment carried enormous weight. The high priest did not represent himself when he entered the tabernacle. He represented the entire covenant community, all twelve tribes, physically present with him in the form of the stones he wore.

The foundations of the New Jerusalem are built from that same category of stone. Not worn by one man on one garment, entering a restricted space once a year, but built permanently into the structure of the city where all of God's people live forever. What was once carried by a single priest into a room only he could enter has become the actual foundation of the place where every believer now dwells in unrestricted access to God.

This connects to something Peter writes to the church, drawing on that same priestly identity. Peter tells believers that they are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own possession. That language did not originate with Peter. It goes back to [Exodus 19](#), where God first told Israel at Sinai that they would be a kingdom of priests to him, if they kept his covenant. What was true in a limited and representative way through the high priest and his breastplate in the Old Testament has become true, without restriction, for every believer in the New Testament. And what is true positionally for believers now becomes true architecturally in the New Jerusalem. The priestly access that once belonged to one man, one day a year, is now the foundation every redeemed person stands on.

It is worth being honest that the precise correspondence between the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate in [Exodus 28](#) and the twelve stones listed here in [Revelation 21](#) is debated among careful readers of Scripture. Part of the difficulty comes from how ancient gemstones were named, since naming conventions shifted over centuries and did not always map cleanly onto the stones we call by those names today. Part of it comes from differences between the Hebrew text of Exodus and the Greek translation John and his readers would have been more familiar with. The exact stone-by-stone match is not the point being made here. The point is the category itself. Twelve stones, tied to Israel's priesthood, now forming the permanent foundation of God's dwelling with his people.

V.21 — Pearl Gates and a Gold Street

Revelation 21:21 BSB

²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, with each gate consisting of a single pearl. The main street of the city was pure gold, as clear as glass.

Each of the twelve gates is a single pearl.

A pearl is not simply a beautiful object. It is formed through injury. An irritant enters a living organism, and the organism responds by covering that irritant, layer after layer, over time, until what was once a wound becomes something valuable. The gates into the eternal city, the entry points every redeemed person will pass through, are made from something that exists only because of a wound that was covered and transformed into something of surpassing worth.

The street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass, the same description given to the city itself back in verse 18. In the ancient world, the main street of a city was the center of ordinary public life. Commerce happened there. Conversations happened there. The routine, daily rhythm of an entire population passed over that street every single day. John is telling us that even the most ordinary, unremarkable part of daily existence in the New Jerusalem, the street beneath your feet, is made from something that has no counterpart in the world we currently know.

Key Themes

The city and the bride are the same reality. John is told he will see a bride and he is shown a city. This is not two images loosely associated with each other. The New Jerusalem is the redeemed community of God, and every gate, foundation, and measurement in this passage is a description of his people, not a real estate report.

Old covenant and new covenant are one structure, not two stories. The twelve gates carry the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve foundations carry the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Neither can be removed without the whole structure collapsing. The people of God across the entire span of redemptive history are one people, standing on one foundation.

What was once restricted is now permanent and complete. The city is a perfect cube, matching the exact proportions of the holy of holies, the most restricted room in Israel's worship. What one man could enter once a year now belongs, without restriction, to everyone who is in it.

Priesthood is no longer representative. It is universal. The twelve foundation stones match the stones on the high priest's breastplate, which he alone carried into God's presence on behalf of the people. That access, once mediated through a single man, is now the literal ground every believer stands on.

Nothing in this city arrived by accident. The gates are made of pearl, and a pearl exists only because a wound was covered and transformed into something valuable. Every material in this section, gold that doesn't exist in the current world, foundations built from priestly stones, gates formed from injury, testifies that this city was purchased, not simply built.

Application

1. The gates of the New Jerusalem carry the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the foundations carry the names of the twelve apostles. If you are a Gentile believer, this passage is telling you plainly that you are not a guest standing outside a story that belongs to someone else. You are built into the same foundation. Where in your life do you still feel like you are on the outside of what God is doing rather than built into the center of it?
2. The New Jerusalem is a holy of holies the size of a continent. What one priest could only enter once a year, after extensive purification, is now where every believer permanently lives. Hebrews tells us we have confidence to enter by the blood of Jesus. That confidence is not arrogance. It is simply believing what the cross actually accomplished. Do you approach God with the confidence that access, or do you still carry the instinct that you need to earn your way close to him?
3. The twelve foundation stones connect to the high priest's breastplate, and Peter tells us that every believer is now part of a royal priesthood. A priest represents others before God and carries their names into his presence. Who are you carrying into God's presence in prayer this week? Whose name do you need to bring before him, the way the high priest once carried the names of the twelve tribes over his heart?
4. Every material in this vision, from the gold to the gates to the foundations, exists because it was purchased. Nothing about the New Jerusalem is generic or accidental. When you consider your own place in the people of God, do you think of it as something you happened into, or as something that was specifically and deliberately paid for? Let this passage push you toward gratitude that is specific rather than vague.

Closing

We have walked through the entire architecture of the New Jerusalem tonight. Gates named for the twelve tribes. Foundations named for the twelve apostles. A perfect cube, matching the most restricted room in all of Israel's worship. Stones drawn from a high priest's breastplate. Gates made from something that only exists because of a wound.

Go back to where the angel started. Come, I will show you the bride. And what John saw was a city.

Here is why that matters, and it is worth sitting with before we close.

A city and a bride are not the same kind of thing. A city is a structure. Walls. Foundations. Permanence. A bride is a person, in relationship, intimate and known. John puts both words on the same reality because neither word by itself can say what he is describing.

Think back to the garden. God walked with man in the cool of the day. The relationship between God and man in Eden was completely real. But the garden had no foundation, no walls, no gates. No permanence...

What John is shown in Revelation 21 is that same relationship, finally given a structure that cannot be breached. Walls. Twelve foundations. Gates with angels standing watch. Every material in this vision is chosen because it cannot corrode, cannot fail, cannot be taken by force. This is not architecture for its own sake. It is a declaration about what this relationship has become. This is intimacy with God that has finally been given permanence.

That permanence describes what is true once God's people stand inside this city, having already been brought safely through the great white throne, their names already and finally confirmed in the Book of Life. What it tells us is what waits on the other side of faithfulness. Once you are there, the city, and the relationship, are permanent.

And that is what all of this architecture has been describing the whole time. Not a place you visit. Not a structure you tour. When John calls this city a bride, he means you. The people of God, gathered, secured, and given a place that cannot be entered by anything that would ever try to take you from him again.

Next week we are going to notice something conspicuously absent from everything we have just walked through. Ezekiel's city, the one this whole vision has been following, had a temple at its center. John never mentions one.

We will find out why next week.