

## Revelation 21

### (NKJV) All Things Made New

<sup>1</sup> Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.<sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.<sup>4</sup> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup> Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

<sup>6</sup> And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.<sup>7</sup> He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.<sup>8</sup> But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

### The New Jerusalem

<sup>9</sup> 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.”<sup>10</sup> 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,<sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.<sup>12</sup> 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:<sup>13</sup> three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

<sup>14</sup> Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.<sup>15</sup> And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.<sup>18</sup> The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.<sup>19</sup> 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,<sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.<sup>21</sup> 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.

### The Glory of the New Jerusalem

<sup>22</sup> But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).<sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.<sup>27</sup> 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.

## A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH: “IN” VERSUS “WITH”

The idea of a new creation is deeply embedded in Jewish thought. The idea is far more than simply a fresh version of what once existed. As we look into the details of the New Jerusalem, we find that heaven and earth have become one seamless creation; at least to the point that heaven is now on earth.

There is also a powerful contrast here. "That great city", of earlier chapters, *the harlot*, which we have come to understand as *human community without God*, stands in stark contrast to *the great city*, New Jerusalem. The harlot was seductive in tacky glitter while the New Jerusalem stands in genuine glory. The New Jerusalem is human community *consummated* with God.

***The New Jerusalem isn't simply a city, it is a tabernacle.*** The structure of the city is based on twelves; the twelve precious stones found in the Old Testament priest's breastplate that represent the twelve tribes; twelve foundations representing the apostles, twelve gates, and measurements that are multiples of 12. 12 is a number of God, He created 12 tribes and raised up twelve apostles. The imagery is a melding of, not just God and mankind, but Old and New Testament believers. It is the completed story of God. It is the fulfillment of the entire Bible.

The city is a perfect cube, its measurements being multiples of 3, 7, and 12 (144), and the cubed use of 10. ***All these numbers symbolize in some way; God, holiness, and completeness.***

***The light of this city is "like jasper", the light is God Himself.*** The walls are also made of jasper. Jasper symbolizes the nature of God. The light refers to the "shekinah" glory, which in the first Temple, was the presence of God in such a tangible form that it drove every person from the Temple.

There is a pattern here. The cubic shape of the new city is a direct reference to the Temple's Holy of Holies, where God would reside in Old Testament tradition. The walls are made of jasper which represents the nature of God, so the nature of God surrounds the city, and the presence of God fills the city. The "shekinah", the "lamb", the light and glory; every person of the Holy Trinity is represented. When you put all the imagery together, ***the citizens of God's Kingdom don't simply live WITH God; they live IN God.***

As grand as this is; once again, it's not new information. Before Jesus ascended; He told His apostles that He was offering a special prayer to the Father.

#### **John 14**

16. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever,  
 17. "even the ***Spirit of truth***, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for ***He dwells with you and will be in you.***  
 18. "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.  
 19. "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.  
 20. "At that day you will know that ***I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.***  
 21. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

### **WHAT THE MEANING OF THE CITY IMPLIES FOR US NOW**

The theme and the promise has never changed! The New Jerusalem is the full manifestation of that prayer! But that implies something; ***living in unity with God starts right now. If God isn't living in the person now; the person won't be living in God later!*** -The "ticket into heaven" isn't enough good deeds or a high enough standard of morals; the most foundational requirement is: Christ living in you.

***What is most important in eternity should be the top priority of the church right now; wouldn't you agree?***

Well the best run programs, the nicest building, the coolest groups won't really mean much in the eternal picture. What will make all the difference will be; did God LIVE in you or not? Did it show in body, mind, and spirit?

In the promise of chapter 21; not only is the city beautifully perfect, the **quality of living is perfect**. It is the **reversal of the fall**. When sin entered our reality, the first thing it brought with it, was death, and from there, came tears, pain, and misery. The end is a reversal; death and the grave are destroyed, and there are no tears or pain because quite simply, everything about life goes on in the way life was meant to be.

We see that every item mentioned is steeped in thousands of years of spiritual thinking. **To understand the imagery is to develop a deeper theology.**

## THE SEA & THE CERTAINTY OF LIFE

There is one last bit of symbolism that may strike our modern ears a little odd:

<sup>1</sup> Now I **saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away**. Also there was **no more sea**.

### Why should there be no more sea?

In our day, we understand the sea as a giver of life. It generates oxygen into the atmosphere. It is critical to the fueling of weather systems that all life on the land. We have giant cruise ships and we sail on the sea, not just in security, but luxury.

Let's put ourselves in John's mind. In his time, the compass hadn't even been invented yet. The sea was a big scary void. If ships sailed too far from land, they may never be seen again! The sea was always changing, and in a small wooden craft that depended on wind for propulsion, an angry sea could be a death sentence. The sea was a void where spirits are stranded between realms. The sea was unknown, even evil. It was a great uncertainty that could bring misery and death. In the image of no more sea is to say; life will never suffer from uncertainty or misery anymore.

## THE CHAPTER'S THEME IN A NUTSHELL

The theme of the chapter is this: The final outcome is logical; those who lived opposite of God, go to what is opposite God. Those who are in the "Lamb's Book of Life" continue to the final consummation with God. As the scholar Morris puts it, "**after the new Jerusalem descends there appears to be no difference between heaven and earth.**"

Because the New Jerusalem, strictly speaking; IS God.

## DISCUSSION

- WHAT STRUCK YOU THE MOST IN THIS CHAPTER?
- WHY ARE PRECIOUS STONES AND METALS USED TO DESCRIBE THE NEW JERUSALEM?
- DO WE LIVE (IN ETERNITY) WITH GOD ON EARTH, OR IN HEAVEN?