

Revelation Chapter 21 Continued

Revelation 21:11 "Having the glory of God: and her light [was] like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;"

"The Glory of God": The brilliance radiating from New Jerusalem caused by the full manifestation of God's glory will be so much, the city will have no need of the sun or the moon as the glory of God will illuminate it.

"Jasper": A transliteration, not a translation, of the Greek word. Rather than the modern opaque jasper, the term actually refers to a completely clear diamond, a perfect gem with the brilliant light of God's glory shining out of it and streaming over the new heaven and the new earth (compare 4:3).

Verses 12-14: See (verse 16), for the dimensions of the city and, thus, the length of the wall.

Revelation 21:12 "And had a wall great and high, [and] had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are [the names] of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:"

The inclusion of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles in the foundations and gates of the city (see 21:14), indicates that both Jewish and Gentile believers will all be part of the family of God and share eternity as one. Although it would seem that the Jews are distinct from the Church during the Millennium, they will all be one as children of the living God for eternity.

If you have ever been to Jerusalem in Israel, you know the old city has a large wall around the city. The physical Jerusalem here has 12 gates. You see, this earthly Jerusalem is a replica of this heavenly Jerusalem.

Here we see their names (twelve tribes), celebrating God's covenant relationship with Israel, the people of the promises, covenants, scriptures and the Messiah.

These angels are stationed to attend to God's glory and to serve His people.

Revelation 21:13 "On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates."

This is reminiscent of the way the twelve tribes camped around the tabernacle (in numbers chapter 2), and the allotment of tribal lands around the millennial temple (Ezek. 48).

Revelation 21:14 "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

The foundation of Christianity was established by Jesus through the twelve apostles. You can easily see, this is not only a city but stands for the Christians as well.

These stones commemorate God's covenant relationship with the church of which the apostles are the foundation of.

The layout of New Jerusalem's gates picture God's favor on all His redeemed people from both the old and new covenant.

Revelation 21:15 "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof."

“Golden reed to measure”: This rod was about 10 foot long, a standard for measure.

This is like (Ezek. 40:3), and the measuring of the millennial temple. Also, the measuring of the Tribulation temple described (in chapter 11:1).

All three measurements are showing the significance that shows what belongs to God. This action indicates that the capital of heaven belongs to God and He is measuring what is His (compare 11:1; Ezek. 40:3).

Revelation 21:16 "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

“Twelve thousand furlongs”: This would be about two million square miles of ground space, offering plenty of room for all the glorified saints to live.

The city lies foursquare. The size of this city indicates that each border is approximately fifteen hundred miles long. Thus, the dimensions of the city would be equal to the area from the eastern seaboard of the United States to Colorado on one side and from the Canadian border to the southern tip of Florida on the other. In addition to the length and breadth, the city will be fifteen hundred miles high. This great size will afford sufficient space for the habitation of the saints from all ages of history.

“Length and the breadth and the height”: The city has the symmetrical dimensions of a perfect cube, which parallels its closest earthly counterpart, the inner sanctuary in the tabernacle and temple (compare 1 Kings 6:20).

We see here that this city is a cube. Twelve thousand furlongs is 1500 miles. This city is 1500 miles square and 1500 miles high.

Revelation 21:17 "And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred [and] forty [and] four cubits, [according to] the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."

A cubic is 18 inches or 1-1/2 feet. Times 144, the wall was 216 feet across. Just as in Babylon the walls, were wide enough for chariot races. This is even wider.

To emphasize the city's dimensions are literal and not mystical, John tells us that the measurements are given according to human measurements.

Revelation 21:18 "And the building of the wall of it was [of] jasper: and the city [was] pure gold, like unto clear glass."

The massive walls a material called jasper. This is the material of the thick wall, diamond! This is the same diamond like stone that was mentioned (in verse 11), clear as crystal.

“Pure gold, like unto clear glass”: Next the city itself was pure gold, like clear glass. Imagine how God's glory will radiate throughout and light up the entire city.

Unlike earth's gold, this gold will be transparent so the overpowering radiance of God's glory can refract and glisten through the entire city.

Verses 19-20: Because some of the names of these gems have changed through the centuries, it is difficult to identify each one with certainty. Eight of the 12 stones are found in the breastpiece of the High-Priest (Exodus chapters 28 and 29), and the other 4 may also be related to the breastpiece. The gems picture a brilliant, indescribable panoply of beautiful colors that send forth the light of God's glory. The following are possible identifications for these gems.

Revelation 21:19 "And the foundations of the wall of the city [were] garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation [was] jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;"

The foundation of the wall; the promise and power of God, and the purchase of Christ, are the strong foundations of the safety and happiness of the church. These foundations are set forth by twelve sorts of precious stones, denoting the variety and excellence of the doctrines of the gospel, or of the graces of the Holy Spirit, or the personal excellences of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Heaven has gates; there is a free admission to all that are sanctified; they shall not find themselves shut out. These gates were all of pearls. Christ is the Pearl of great price, and he is our Way to God. The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. The saints in heaven tread gold under foot. The saints are there at rest, yet it is not a state of sleep and idleness; they have communion, not only with God, but with one another. All these glories but faintly represent heaven.

“Chalcedony”: This name derives from Chalcedon, an ancient name for a city in modern Turkey. The gem is a sky-blue agate stone with translucent, colored stripes.

Revelation 21:20 "The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst".

“Sardonyx”: A variety of chalcedony with parallel layers of red and white (see note on verse 19).

“Sardius”: A common stone from the quartz family, which ranged in color from orange-red to brownish-red to blood-red (4:3).

“Chrysolite”: A gem with a transparent gold or yellowish tone.

“Beryl”: A mineral with several varieties of gems, ranging from the green emerald to the golden yellow beryl to the light blue aquamarine.

“Topaz”: Ancient topaz was a softer stone with a yellow or yellow-green color.

“Chrysoprasus”: The modern form of this jewel is an apple-green variety of quartz. The Greek name suggests a gold-tinted, green gemstone.

“Jacinth”: Today this stone is a transparent zircon, usually red or reddish-brown. The one John saw was blue or shining violet in color.

“Amethyst”: A clear quartz crystal that ranges in color from a faint purple tint to an intense purple.

These brightly colored stones will refract the shining brilliance of God's glory into a spectrum of beautiful colors that will flash from New Jerusalem throughout the re-created universe.

Revelation 21:21 "And the twelve gates [were] twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city [was] pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

“Was of one pearl”: Each of the gates of the city is a single, almost 1400 mile-high pearl. Even as earthly pearls are formed in response to the wounding of oyster flesh, so these gigantic, supernatural pearls will remind saints throughout eternity of the magnitude of Christ’s suffering and its eternal benefit.

The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Every gate will be one pearl, each large enough to cover the gateway to this huge city. In addition, the street of the city will be "pure gold, like unto clear glass," indicating that believers will walk on golden streets. The holy city of God will be so magnificent that believers will literally walk on precious metals that today are used for costly adornments.

There is no silver in the city. Silver means redemption and we have already been redeemed. These stones show us things that are important here on the earth are plentiful in heaven. You see, God owns all the wealth in the world. God has so many rare stones He even puts them in the wall. Each gate is made of just one pearl.

And remember the height of the cube is 1500 miles. That makes for a very large pearl.

The streets in New Jerusalem is made of the highest quality of pure gold which is like everything else, transparent. We are not familiar with transparent gold here on earth, but everything in heaven is transparent to let the light of God's glory blaze unrestricted.

Verses 22-23: There is "no temple" in the city, since both the Father and the Son will be present in their fullest manifestations. Its "light" will be provided by the Shekinah "glory of God" and of Christ (compare Exodus 3:3-4; 24:15-17; 33:14-16; Luke 2:9; 9:29; Heb. 1:3).

Revelation 21:22 "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

"No temple therein:" Several passages affirm that there is a temple in heaven (3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 15:5). Here, it is clear there is none in eternity. How can this be? The temple is not a building; it is the Lord God Himself. (Revelation 7:15), implies this when it says, "He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them". (Verse 23), continues the thought of no temple, "except God and the Lamb". The glory of God which illuminates all heaven defines it as His temple. There is no need for a temple in the eternal state since God Himself will be the temple in which everything exists. The presence of God literally fills the entire new heaven and new earth (compare verse 3). Going to heaven will be entering the limitless presence of the Lord (compare John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:17).

There will be no need for a temple in heaven to provide a means for a man to fellowship with God. Because of Jesus sacrificial death on the cross, sin will not exist there. God and the Lamb are the temple of the eternal city. This clearly emphasizes the deity of Christ as equal in essence to that of the father.

There will be no need for anyone to go anywhere to worship God. Believers will constantly be in His presence. There will never be a minute when they are not in perfect, Holy Communion with the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. Therefore, there will be no need for a temple, cathedral, church, chapel or any other house of worship. Believers will be the true worshipers God has always sought.

Revelation 21:23 "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb [is] the light thereof."

No more day and night but there will be one eternal day. The Glory of God will illuminate New Jerusalem and its lamp will be the Lamb Jesus, who is the Light, and does away with darkness.

"Verses 24-27: The glory of God in the New Jerusalem will "light" the "earth". Whether this is the new earth (verse 1), or the millennial earth is not clear. Perhaps the New Jerusalem will give

light to the earth during the Millennium as a satellite city (compare Isa. Chapter 60). The “nations”, ruled by various “kings” and levels of earthly authority, will honor the heavenly city as the dwelling place of God. The clause “of them which are saved” is found neither in the oldest nor in the majority of manuscripts, but clearly expresses the sense of the passage. The open “gates” show that security measures are no longer necessary (compare Isa. 60:11). “Day” is continuous since darkness never comes. Only redeemed and glorified people will have access to or dwell in the New Jerusalem (compare verse 8; 22:15; Isa. 52:1; Ezek. 44:9; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 2 Peter 3:13). No sinful “thing that defileth” will enter God’s presence.

Revelation 21:24 "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

“The nations”: Literally “the peoples”. Redeemed people from every nation and ethnic group will dwell in heaven’s light. In the eternal city, there will be no more divisions, barriers, or exclusions because of race or politics. All kinds of peoples in eternity dissolve into the people of God, and they will move freely in and about the city.

The reference to "nations" reminds us that our national distinctions, like our personal appearances, are God-given. (Rev. 7:9), refers to "a great multitude of all nations," and (Revelation 5:10), refers to believers as "kings and priests" who reign with Christ.

Not that any national identities will be preserved in the eternal state, but rather just the opposite. People from every tongue, tribe and nation whether Jews or Gentiles, will be united as God's people. Every believer will be fully equal in the eternal capital city.

This just means that God doesn't care whether you are Chinese, African, or American. If you accept Jesus, you will be in heaven regardless of what country you're from.

Revelation 21:25 "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."

Its gates will never be closed. This depicts the city's complete security and that there is no need to close them. The only time most people lock their doors is at night. Most crimes are done under cover of darkness. Jesus is the source of all light. With the source of light present, there will be no night.

New Jerusalem is a place of rest, safety and refreshment where God's people will "rest from their labors." Never again will anything have to be shut up for fear of losing it by thieves and robbers. None of that will ever exist again.

Revelation 21:26 "And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it."

All who enter heaven will surrender their earthly prestige and glory when they enter. All who enter heaven "will cast their crowns before the throne" of God" (Chapter 4:10).

Revelation 21:27 "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

The Jerusalem of the world to come is not as the Jerusalem of this new world. The Jerusalem of this world, whoever would go up to it or enter into it might; but for the New Jerusalem of the world to come, "There are none who may go up to it (or enter into it), but those who are prepared" or appointed for it.

Or maketh a lie; any lie in general who is a common liar. One who loves and invents a lie, and speaks one: Delivers that which is false with an intention to deceive. Or who in particular that embraces and propagates antichristian lies, doctrinal ones, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such shall be damned;

1 Timothy 4:1 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"

"Shall depart from the faith": Those who fall prey to the false teachers will abandon the Christian faith. The Greek word for "fall away" is the source of the English word "apostatize," and refers to someone moving away from an original position.

But they which are written in the Lamb's book of life; those who are predestinated to eternal life. And though they are naturally, and in themselves defiled and sinful creatures, yet they are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit. These then are made meet and fit to enter this city.

This Scripture just means that this is a holy city (a place of true worship). There will be no evil of any kind in it. The residents are the redeemed, those washed in the blood of the lamb. Those who have been made righteous in Christ.

Once again, we are confronted with the significance of having our names written in the Lamb's book of life assuring us that Christ knows each believer personally, by name (see note on 3:5; see article "**Book of Life - All Books**").

What a wonder this will be, to continually see God's face (Rev. 22:4), and to walk in the light of His presence (Rev 21:23; 22:5). No wonder John tells us there is no temple in heaven (Rev. 21:22), for as Paul wrote, "who hopes for what one already has" (Romans 8:24). What need could you have for a temple when everywhere you go is God? But a temple is not the only thing missing in heaven. What else does it lack?

Consider the following short list:

- (1) No more sea (21:1);
- (2) No more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain (21:4);
- (3) No more sinners (21:8);
- (4) No more fear (21:12);

- (5) No more sun or moon (21:23);
- (6) No more night (21:25);
- (7) No more sin or evil (21:27);
- (8) No more disease or injuries (22:2);
- (9) No more curse (22:3).

It would be enough to call this place "heaven" just from that list of what it lacks. But that wouldn't tell half of the story! Now consider some of the remarkable features eternity will boast:

- (1) Unending fellowship with God (Revelation 21:3, 7, 22);
- (2) Unending newness (Revelation 21:5);
- (3) Unending water of life (Revelation 21:6; 22:1);
- (4) Unimaginable beauty (21:11, 21);
- (5) Uncompromised security (Revelation 21:12);
- (6) Unbroken unity between believers (21:12, 14);
- (7) Unlimited holiness (21:16);
- (8) Unparalleled size (21:16);
- (9) Untold wealth (21:18-21);
- (10) Unending light (21:23; 22:5);
- (11) Unrestricted access (21:25);
- (12) Unending fruit from the tree of life (22:2);
- (13) Unceasing service to God (22:3);
- (14) Unending reign (22:5).

Beyond these thrilling descriptions from the book of Revelation, we know from other Bible texts that heaven will be a place of:

- (1) Rest (Heb. 4:1-11; Rev 14:13);
- (2) Full knowledge (1 Cor. 13:12);
- (3) Holiness (Heb. 12:14; Eph. 2:21);
- (4) Joy (1 Thess. 2:19; Jude 1:24);
- (5) Glory (2 Cor. 4:17);
- (6) Worship (Rev. 7:9-12; 19:10).

With all that heaven and eternity have to offer, it is hard to see why anyone would deliberately choose to miss it.

Yet many will, according to (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:11, 15). Make sure you're not one of them!

Revelation Chapter 21 Continued Questions

1. The light was like what?
2. How many gates were in the wall?
3. Where were the names of the apostles?
4. Twelve thousand furlongs is how far?
5. This city was a _____.
6. How wide was the wall?
7. Are these literal measurements?
8. What was the wall?
9. The city was pure gold like unto _____.
10. What was garnished with all manners of precious stones?
11. What were the gates made of?
12. Who are the temple?
13. Why did the city not need the sun or moon?
14. What is verse 24 talking about?
15. Who guarded the gates?
16. Who are the inhabitants?
17. What would you like heaven to be like?