

Revelation 21 – The New City Jerusalem

I. The Fulfillment of The New City (1-8)

A. The New Creation's Introduction (1)

1. John Sees a New Heaven and a New Earth

- a. Fulfillment of Isaiah 65:17 - "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
- b. Remain Forever Isaiah 66:22-23 - "For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your offspring and your name remain. From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord.

2. The First Heaven and Earth are Gone

- a. The corrupted creation is dispelled (along with the separation between heaven and earth
- b. Why is there no sea? Possibilities:
 - i. Represents Cosmic chaos – the waters of creation in the beginning of Genesis
 - ii. Represents the rebellious nations that persecute God's remnant (See Isa. 57:20)
 - iii. Represents the place of the dead (See Rev. 20:13, and 21:4 says there will be no more death)
 - iv. Represents the absence of the bronze laver in the new eschatological temple (i.e New City)

B. The New City of God (2-4)

1. The Holy City is the New Jerusalem (2)

- a. The City descends out of heaven from God
 - i. This is the inbreaking of God's kingdom in its fullness into creation
 - ii. Heaven and earth now united as one where God will dwell with his people
- b. The City is adorned as a bride
 - i. This anticipates the marriage of God to His people
 - ii. Isa. 61:10 - I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
 - iii. Revelation 3:12 - He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city

of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

iv. God has prepared his people for himself

2. The Holy City is God's Presence Fulfilled (3)

a. The Tabernacle of God is Among men

b. God will dwell with His people

i. Ezekiel 37:26-28 – "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever."

ii. Leviticus 26:11-12 - Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.

iii. Zechariah 2:10-11 - Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the Lord. "Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.

3. The Holy City is The Removal of The Curse (4)

a. God will wipe away every tear

i. Isa. 25:8 - He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken.

ii. No more sorrow and pain of this life

b. Death will be no more

i. 1 Co. 15:26 - The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

c. Mourning or pain will be no more

C. The New City is God's Fulfillment (6-8)

1. God Declares the Fulfillment of All Things (5-6a)

a. He makes all things new (5a)

i. Alpha and Omega – references to God being first and the last (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)

b. John is commissioned to write God's words (5b)

c. God declares the fulfillment (6a)

- i. It has come to pass (literally)
 - ii. All of salvation history has been moving toward this point.
- 2. God Declares the Blessings of Redemption (6b-7)
 - i. Those who thirst will be given water of life
 - The Waters of Life – Isa. 55:1 - “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.
 - Also reference to “living waters” – John 4:10 - Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”
 - b. Those who overcome will inherit the city
 - i. Here is the connection between the letters to the seven churches and the fulfillment of all things
 - ii. Not special believers – all those who are regenerated (See 1 John 5:4)
- 3. God Declares the Condemnation of the Wicked (8)
 - a. Those characterized by sin will have their part in the second death
 - i. Not anyone who has ever committed a sin
 - ii. These are those whose lives are characterized by the fact that they have not been regenerated – their hearts are revealed in their actions
 - iii. Notice the last verse of this chapter – those whose names are in the book of life have access to the city
 - b. The point is that the purity and holiness of the New Jerusalem is maintained – no sin will enter
 - i. Notice “their part” – they have their part in the lake of fire
 - ii. This is opposed to those who are blessed having “their part” in the first resurrection (See ch. 20)

II. The Description of the New City (9-21)

A. The New City is The Bride (9-10)

- 1. John hears that he will be shown the bride herself (9)
 - a. The bride is here opposed to the harlot
 - b. Notice the similar language introducing the harlot and the bride
 - i. The harlot – Revelation 17:1-3
 - ii. The bride – Revelation 21:9-10
- 2. John is carried away to see the new city (10)

- a. John will be shown the fulfillment of salvation history
 - b. Remember the symbolic nature of the book – We are not necessarily seeing what the new city “looks” like. We are being shown what the city “is” like.
 - i. As Satan is depicted as a dragon
 - ii. As Christ is depicted as a lamb
- 3. Notice that the bride IS the Holy City
 - a. This is a clear symbol of the church as the bride of Christ and the New Jerusalem prophesied in the OT
 - b. John’s vision of this new perfect Jerusalem mirrors the vision of the perfect Jerusalem given to Ezekiel in Eze. 40-48
- B. The New City’s Glory (11)
 - 1. The shekeinah glory of God once again dwells with His people
 - 2. God Himself has given His glory again to His people
 - a. Isa. 60:1-2 - Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. “For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the Lord will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you.
 - b. Isa. 60:19 - No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, And your God for your glory.
- C. The New City’s OT Reference
 - 1. The description of the New City mirror the description of the perfect Jerusalem given in Ezekiel 40-48.
- D. The New City’s Gates (12-13)
 - 1. The 12 gates are guarded by angels (12a)
 - a. Reminds us of the garden Temple in Eden where God placed cherubim to guard the gates after Adam was exiled
 - b. Also possible reference to Isa. 62:5-7 - For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you. On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; And give Him no rest until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
 - c. Luke 13:29 - “And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline *at the table* in the kingdom of God.
 - 2. The 12 gates are named (12b)
 - a. The twelve tribes of Israel’s names appear on the gates of the city

- b. Perhaps it is because it is through Israel that the Messiah and his salvation has come to the world
 - c. Also this reminds us of the tabernacle in the wilderness where the twelve tribes of Israel were commanded to camp in order on the four sides of the tabernacle
- 3. The 12 gates' positions (13)
 - a. The positions and the names on the gates are an allusion and fulfillment of Ezekiel's perfect Jerusalem in Ezekiel 48:31-34
 - b. Ezekiel 48:31-34 - These are the exits of the city: on the north side, 4,500 cubits by measurement, shall be the gates of the city, named for the tribes of Israel, three gates toward the north: the gate of Reuben, one; the gate of Judah, one; the gate of Levi, one. On the east side, 4,500 cubits, shall be three gates: the gate of Joseph, one; the gate of Benjamin, one; the gate of Dan, one. On the south side, 4,500 cubits by measurement, shall be three gates: the gate of Simeon, one; the gate of Issachar, one; the gate of Zebulun, one. On the west side, 4,500 cubits, shall be three gates: the gate of Gad, one; the gate of Asher, one; the gate of Naphtali, one. The city shall be 18,000 cubits round about; and the name of the city from that day shall be, "The Lord is there."
- E. The New City's Foundation Stones (14)
 - 1. Are these 12 foundations or 12 foundation stones?
 - 2. Some see reference Solomon's Temple here in 1 Ki. 5:17 - Then the king commanded, and they quarried great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with cut stones.
 - 3. The names of the apostles on the stones (or foundations) tells us two things
 - a. First, it reminds us of the names of the tribes on the stones of the High Priest's ephod as he interceded for the people
 - b. Second, it tells us that the New Jerusalem is build for the people of God who include both Jew and Gentile
 - 4. Hebrews 12:22-23 - But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect,
- F. The New City's Measurements (15-17)
 - 1. The angel prepares to measure the city (15)
 - a. This is a reference to Ezekiel 43:3-5 as he sees and angel coming to measure the perfect Temple
 - 2. The city is a perfect square

- a. It has often baffled people that the city is in the shape of a cube
 - b. It seems like some kind of square space ship coming down from the sky, but those who understood the significance of the temple imagery would understand the perfect square completely made of gold
 - c. It is the exactly shape and material which the holy of holies was made of in Solomon's Temple
 - d. 1 Kings 6:20 - The inner sanctuary *was* twenty cubits in length, twenty cubits in width, and twenty cubits in height, and he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid the altar with cedar.
 - e. Here the entire city is the "most holy place" where God dwells
- 3. The measurements of the wall
 - a. The entire city's measurements are in multiples of 12
 - b. We have seen this as the number of fullness and completeness – the 144,000, twelve tribes, twelve apostles, etc.
 - c. Notice there is only one wall – in the previous temple complex there were walls separating the outer courts and the inner courts
- G. The New City's Materials (18-21)
 - 1. The city is pure gold (18)
 - 2. The foundation stones are adorned with jewels (19-20)
 - a. Beale - The list of twelve jewels adorning the foundation stones of the wall is based on the list in Exod. 28:17–20 and 39:8–14 of the twelve stones on the high priest's "breastpiece of judgment," which was a pouch containing the Urim and Thummim. Eight of the stones in Exodus are repeated here in Rev. 21:19–20, and the differently named stones in Revelation are semantic equivalents of the ones in Exodus
 - b. These stones on the breastplate were also arranged in four rows – Exod. 28:17-20
 - c. Also Isa. 54:11-12 - O afflicted one, storm-tossed, *and* not comforted, Behold, I will set your stones in antimony, And your foundations I will lay in ^dsapphires. "Moreover, I will make your battlements of rubies, And your gates of crystal, And your entire wall of precious stones.
 - 3. The gates are of pearl (21a)
 - 4. The Street is gold (21b)
- III. The Fellowship of the New City (22-27)
 - A. God's Presence in the New City (22-23)
 - 1. God himself is the temple (22)

- a. God will dwell in the city as he dwelt in the holy of holies
 - b. There only the high priest could come in, but now all God's children will walk in his presence just as Adam did in the garden
 - c. Notice that God and the Lamb are the Temple
 - i. The Father and the Son are both equated as objects of worship here
 - ii. The triune nature of God is presupposed in this worship
2. God himself is the light (23)
- a. Isa. 60:19-22 - "No longer will you have the sun for light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, And your God for your glory. 20 "Your sun will no longer set, Nor will your moon wane; For you will have the Lord for an everlasting light, And the days of your mourning will be over. 21 "Then all your people *will be* righteous; They will possess the land forever, The branch of My planting, The work of My hands, That I may be glorified. 22 "The smallest one will become a clan, And the least one a mighty nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time."

B. The Citizens of the New City (24-27)

- 1. All the nations will enter the city (24)
 - a. This is not just a temple for the Jews in the last days
 - b. This is the city of all the redeemed
 - c. Isa. 60:3-5 - Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. "Lift up your eyes round about and see; They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms. "Then you will see and be radiant, And your heart will thrill and rejoice. Because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, The wealth of the nations will come to you.
- 2. All nations will worship in the city (25-26)
 - a. Isa. 60:11 - "Your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that *men* may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession.
- 3. Only Those in the book of life will enter (27)
 - a. Although we have seen that no sin will enter
 - b. Those who are the citizens of this city have only one criterion that makes them eligible. Their names are in the book of life.