

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 5.1.2022

## THE NEW JERUSALEM

### I. INTRODUCTION

**MAIN POINT:** In the world to come, the Bride of Christ will radiate with the glory of God, dwell securely in the presence of God, and reflect the beauty and worth ascribed to her by God.

#### REVELATION 21:9-14

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he 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, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

### II. THE GLORY OF THE HOLY CITY

#### HER IDENTITY

- The phrase, "in the Spirit," reminds us of the source of the visions as well as John's prophetic call.
- Who carried John away in the Spirit? V9 It's one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, he carries John away in the Spirit to a high mountain.
- Why is this particular angel taking him to that high mountain? To show John the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.
- What he sees is a holy city coming down out of heaven from God, resplendent with the glory of God.
  
- What's the point of John mentioning this specific angel?
- Ch17 is about Babylon, the whore, who is also presented as a city. (17:18)
- The same angel is mentioned in order to contrast these two cities.
- Both are referred to as woman, one a prostitute, the other a bride.
- Babylon is the anti-church.
- 17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,
- Babylon is the counterpart to the Bride, and the angel shows John the judgment of Babylon.

- 17:3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.
  - So instead of being taken to a mountain, John is taken in the Spirit to a wilderness.
  - Instead of seeing a city come down from heaven, he sees the harlot sitting on the beast.
  - She is also seated on many waters which John tells us later are all of the unbelieving masses of humanity, the community of worldly people who worship the beast.
  - In ch17, the harlot is arrayed with gold and jewels and pearls, similar to the church.
  - She tries to look like the church, she tries to make herself beautiful, but she's not the church.
  - Ch21 the contrast is also drawn between the Bride and the harlot.
- The holy city Jerusalem, is none other than the community of faithful followers of Jesus.
  - This symbol is a reference to the Church.
  - We know that also from the description of the twelve gates of the city that are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes, and the twelve foundation stones of the wall which are inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles—this means that both the OT and NT saints are there.
  - This city is composed of the full and complete expression of the people of God. This is why we have the repeated number 12.
  - The city has twelve gates, with three gates on each side of every cardinal point on the compass, north, south, east, and west.
  - It's laid out like the camp of Israel, with three tribes on each side facing the tabernacle at the center.
  - This means that people from every nation, tribe, and tongue enter the holy city (Rev. 7:9).
- She is a Bride perfected and beautified for her wedding day.
  - She is a Wife, sharing in complete intimacy with the Lamb.
- Why use the picture of a city to refer to the people of God?
  - In the NT, several metaphors are used for the church. They help us understand a facet of our relationship to Christ.
  - Body of Christ (1Cor.12:27; Eph. 5:23), a temple (Eph. 2:19-22), the family of God (Eph. 2:19), a house (Heb. 3:6), we are referred to as sheep, as branches on a vine.
  - For the same reason in ch17 - a particular community of human beings is in view with the metaphor of a city.
  - A city is like the ultimate expression of community.
  - Unlike the false community of Babylon, this vision presents the true community of saints.

## HER APPEARANCE

- “Great high mountain” What we are seeing in this passage is the ultimate fulfillment of OT prophecy that envisioned the coming Jerusalem to be situated atop a high mountain (Ezek. 40:2; Isaiah 2:2,3).
- “Coming down out of heaven from God...” she is coming down, she is descending from God. He is the source of this perfected church.
- “Having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal.” In John’s vision, the church has a radical similarity to God’s glory that he first saw way back in ch4.
- 4:3a And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian,
- The images and descriptors used of God are now attributed to the church.
- The church is arrayed with the glory of God.

- 21:2 prepared like a bride adorned for her husband... she is adorned with the glory of God.
  - What is God's glory? It is the manifestation of his presence.
  - Final 8 chapters of Ezekiel tell us of the final temple in which God's glory will forever be there. The vision ends with the name of the city which is, "The Lord is there." (Ezek. 48:35)
  - John reinterprets Ezekiel's vision and says that the community of people who belong to God are his temple and in them his glory dwells.
  - What makes her beautiful is God's glory and presence.
  - Though the Bride is being showcased, what she is reflecting is God!
  - And God is what is most beautiful and precious in heaven.
- This tells us that no matter how we describe the condition of the church today, she is not yet what she will be. And what she will be is glorious.
  - Be careful how you speak of Christ's bride.
  - Make sure you love Christ's bride.
  - You cannot claim to love Christ and despise his bride.

### III. THE SECURITY OF THE HOLY CITY

- In the ancient world, nothing was more important to the safety and security of a city than walls.
  - In the ancient world, it was the wall that gave a city identity and security.
  - John sees the holy city with a great, high wall, with twelve gates and twelve angels atop those twelve gates.
  - Keep in mind, this is not a literal wall with gates but it represents a powerful reality.
  - The church in her new home, the new heaven and the new earth, are completely safe and secure in her perfect union with God.
  - She is safe behind impenetrable walls, her eternal security can never be threatened.
- Take note of the sentries keeping watch at each of the gates. There are twelve angels stationed there.
  - Allusion to the cherubim stationed at the entrance to the garden (Gen. 3:24).
  - Nothing is going to get past them.
  - v27 tells us that nothing unclean or profane will ever enter it but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.
  - The walls and gates are symbolic of God's complete protection of his people.
  - It is the full realization of Romans 8, these walls are the reality that nothing, for all of eternity, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:39).
  - Never again will anything spoil God's place or his people.
  - Isn't that what we desire—complete security.
  - v25 tell us that the gates will never be shut.
  - In the new world there is no need for locked doors. There is no risk. There is no threat.
  - **Zechariah 2:1-5** And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand! 2 Then I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length." 3 And behold, the angel who talked with me came forward, and another angel came forward to meet him 4 and said to him, "Run, say to that young man, 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. 5 And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst.'"

- We will be safe and secure in the presence of God.

## IV. THE HOLINESS AND VALUE OF THE HOLY CITY

**REVELATION 21:15-17** And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.

### MEASUREMENTS

- Ezekiel's vision of the end-times temple being measured (Ezekiel 40-48).
- Is this a literal city? No. We are talking about a people.
- What John sees measured out is a four-cornered city; It's length and width and height are the same.
- The city is not just a square, it is a perfect cube.
- Where else in the Bible do we have the only other mention of a feature in the geometric shape of a cube? The Holy of Holies in the temple.
- The Holy of Holies was the manifestation of God's presence.
- What does the symbology mean?
- The city is the place where God's manifested presence dwells. The whole city is the Holy of Holies. God is present everywhere.

### TWELVES

- We have looked at the meaning of the number twelve as representing the fullness of something.
- The length and width and height of this cube is 12,000 stadia. That measurement is approximately 1400-1500 miles. That was the approximate size of the known Hellenistic world in John's day.
- 12,000 = 12x1000. One thousand is another number representing a large or great amount.
- What John is saying by this measurement is that the whole world, the whole of the new creation is going to become the Holy of Holies, the place where God dwells.
- The holy city will display the fullness of God's presence that will for all eternity be with the totality of His people.
- Look at all of the twelves in ch21: 12 tribes, 12 apostles, 12 angels, 12 gates, 12 foundations, 12 pearls, 12 precious stones, 12,000 stadia (12x1000), 144 cubits (12x12).
- This is all symbolic and figurative of the fullness of God's presence with the fullness of God's people.
- Wherever the people of God go in the new heaven and new earth is the Holy of Holies because God's presence is everywhere.

### MATERIALS

**REVELATION 21:18-21** The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysolite, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

- The materials listed that are used to construct the city are ones that reveal the worth and value of this city that is beyond our ability to

comprehend.

- The holy city is of inestimable worth.
- The new heaven and new earth have an unlimited supply of the costliest of minerals and precious stones.
- The list of stones here has some correlations and allusions in Scripture.
- Eden, (Gen. 2; Ezek. 28), Solomon's Temple (1Kings 5:17), the breastplate of the High Priest (Exodus 28:17-20).
- What is John seeing in this vision that these stones represent?
- The stones that adorn the foundation of the walls of the city symbolically represent God's people, who are likened to precious and priceless gemstones, reflecting the beauty and glory of God, and the great value he has assigned to her.
  
- Each gate is made up of one single pearl.
- In the Greco-Roman world of John's day, a perfect pearl would be worth more than its weight in gold.
- The point is how could you even begin to put a value on a city constructed with priceless, precious, exquisite gemstones?
- It is a city of incalculable value. We are of incalculable value to God.
- The infinite value and worth of the Bride is revealed in John's vision.
- The Lamb is the one that has assigned his Bride her value.
- And she is worth more than a limitless supply of every precious gemstone in all of creation.
  
- The church's value is assigned by the One who shed his blood, which is of incalculable value, to purchase and redeem her.
- It is Christ who has raised the church to this place of honor, it is God who will adorn her with his glory, it is God who will make her holy, and it is God who will preserve her and protect her for all eternity.

What are we to do with this vision?

- Recognize that there is hope for the church. This is our destiny.
- Pursue Holiness (2Peter 3:11-13)
- Esteem and love the Church.