

## The Book Of Revelation Study 100

### *Revelation 21:9-27 (NASB)*

<sup>9</sup> Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

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

<sup>11</sup> having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

<sup>12</sup> It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.

<sup>13</sup> There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.

<sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

<sup>15</sup> The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.

<sup>16</sup> The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.

<sup>17</sup> And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.

<sup>18</sup> The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

<sup>19</sup> The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone 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, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

<sup>21</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

<sup>22</sup> I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

<sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

<sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

<sup>25</sup> In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

<sup>26</sup> and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it;

<sup>27</sup> and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

### *Revelation 22:1-5 (NASB)*

<sup>1</sup> Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,

<sup>2</sup> in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

<sup>3</sup> There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

<sup>4</sup> they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

<sup>5</sup> And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

On the night before His death, the Lord Jesus made a wonderful promise to all who believe in Him.

**John 14:1-3 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> *"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.*

<sup>2</sup> *"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.*

<sup>3</sup> *"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*

The "Father's house" Jesus referred to is the New Jerusalem, where God will live with His people forever. It is the present heaven where God dwells with the holy angels, and where the redeemed go when they die.

When we studied the previous chapter we saw that the place that the Lord has prepared for them will descend in the eternal state, where it will be the capital city of the new heaven and the new earth.

And just as a person preparing to travel to a foreign country desires to have information about that country, so believers long for a glimpse of that glorious place where they will live eternally.

Knowing their eager sense of anticipation, God has provided believers with a description of heaven. Though only a select few details are given, they are staggering, mind boggling and overwhelming.

As the vision of the New Jerusalem unfolds, history has ended, and time is no more. John and his readers are transported to the eternal state.

Having described the fearful eternal destination of the damned, the lake of fire, the vision takes the beloved exiled apostle to the blissful eternal resting place of the redeemed.

Because it is the capital city of heaven and the link between the new heaven and the new earth, the New Jerusalem is central to the vision and is described in far more detail than the rest of the eternal state.

The book of Hebrews also mentions the glorious capital city of heaven. Describing Abraham's faith, the writer of Hebrews states;

**Hebrews 11:8-10 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> *By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.*

<sup>9</sup> *By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;*

<sup>10</sup> *for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

And in the very next chapter he pens:

**Hebrews 12:22-24 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,*

<sup>23</sup> *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,*

<sup>24</sup> *and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*

As he closed out that epistle, he reminded his readers;

**Hebrews 13:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> *For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.*

What Abraham, and the writer of Hebrews, and the rest of the redeemed have anticipated by faith was revealed to and described by John.

His view of heaven's capital includes several features:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Its general appearance.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Its exterior design,
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Its internal character,
- 4<sup>th</sup> The privileges of its inhabitants.

So let's take this text apart and first look at;

#### ITS GENERAL APPEARANCE

**Revelation 21:9-11 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."*

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

<sup>11</sup> *having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.*

As the vision opened, an angel appeared to call John's attention to the city.

Note that the last appearance of an angel was one thousand years earlier at the beginning of the Millennium (**20:1**)

Angels play a significant role in Revelation, and this particular angel was involved in the Tribulation judgments. Those judgments unfolded in three telescoping series, the seal, trumpet, and climactically, the bowl judgments.

This angel was **one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues (15:1)**

Either he or another of those **seven angels** also introduced the impending judgment of the harlot city of Babylon making the contrast between the two cities apparent.

Inaugurating John's personal tour of heaven's capital city, the angel **came and spoke with the apostle, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."**

Remember in our last study I said that the New Jerusalem is described as a **bride** because it draws its character from its occupants.

Those occupants consist of the **bride of the lamb**, a title originally given to the church, but now enlarged to encompass all the redeemed of all the ages, who live there forever.

The New Jerusalem is likened to a **bride** because the redeemed are forever united to God and the Lamb. It is further defined as **the wife of the Lamb** because the marriage has taken place (**19:7**)

John's incredible vision began when the angel **carried him away in the Spirit**.

When he received the visions that comprise the book of Revelation, the aged apostle was a prisoner of the Romans on the island of Patmos **(1:9)**

But he was transported from there in an amazing spiritual journey to see what unaided human eyes could never see. John's visions were not dreams, but spiritual realities, like those Paul saw when he was also caught up to the third heaven **(2 Cor. 12:2-4)**

The first stop was a **great and high mountain**.

From that vantage point, the angel **showed John the holy city, Jerusalem**.

The apostle repeats his observation from verse 2 that the New Jerusalem came **down out of heaven from God**.

That emphasizes its divine origin;

It is the city **"whose architect and builder is God"**.

It should be noted that what is described here is not the creation of heaven; it is merely the descent of what already existed from eternity past, and is now situated in the center of the new heaven and the new earth.

The most distinguishing characteristic of the capital city of eternity is that it is the throne of the eternal almighty One, and therefore had **the glory of God** in it.

That **glory** will reach its fullest expression there;

**John 17:24 (NASB)**

<sup>24</sup> ***"Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.***

It will be unlimited and unconfined, flashing from that city throughout the re-created universe.

The **glory of God** is the sum total of His attributes and is manifested as blazing light

Sadly, though God revealed His glory, disobedient rebellious people rejected Him.

Even the Lord Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's glory in human form, ***"was despised and forsaken of men"*** **(Isa 53:3)**

Radiating from the New Jerusalem will be the brilliance of the full manifestation of God's glory, so much so that;

**Revelation 21:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> ***And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.***

Isaiah foresaw that same reality;

**Isaiah 60:19 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> ***"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.***

To John, the heavenly city appeared like a giant light bulb, with the brilliant light of God's glory streaming out of it.

But that light did not shine through the thin glass of a light bulb, but through what looked to John like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal clear jasper.

The city appeared to the apostle like one gigantic precious stone.

Jasper does not refer to the modern stone of the same name, which is opaque; it is a transliteration of the Greek word "iaspis", which describes a translucent stone.

The word jasper in this passage is best understood as referring to a diamond, a very costly one because it is crystal-clear and unblemished.

Heaven's capital city is thus pictured as a huge, flawless diamond, refracting the brilliant, blazing, glory of God throughout the new heaven and the new earth.

Thus we see it's outward appearance.

Next;

### ITS EXTERIOR DESIGN

**Revelation 21:12-21 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> *It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.*

<sup>13</sup> *There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.*

<sup>14</sup> *And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

<sup>15</sup> *The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.*

<sup>16</sup> *The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal.*

<sup>17</sup> *And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.*

<sup>18</sup> *The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.*

<sup>19</sup> *The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone 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, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.*

<sup>21</sup> *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

Human language is inadequate to fully describe the unimaginable magnificence of the believers indescribable eternal home.

Unwillingness to take the language of Scripture at face value causes many to seek for some hidden meaning behind John's description.

But if the words do not mean what they say, who has the authority to say what they do mean?

Abandoning the literal meaning of the text leads only to baseless, groundless, futile speculation.

The truth about the heavenly city is more than is described, but not less and not different from what is described. It is a material creation, yet so unique as to be unimaginable to us. The words of John provide all the detail we have been given by God to excite our hope.

That the city **had a great and high wall** indicates that it is not an amorphous, nebulous, floating place. It has specific dimensions; it has limits; it can be entered and left through its **twelve gates**.

At those **gates twelve angels** were stationed to attend to God's glory and to serve His people.

**Hebrews 1:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

The **gates** had **names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel**, celebrating for all eternity God's covenant relationship with Israel, the people of the promises, the covenants, the Scriptures, and the Messiah.

They were arranged symmetrically: **there were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west**.

That arrangement is reminiscent of the way the twelve tribes camped around the tabernacle (**Num 2**), and of the allotment of the tribal lands around the millennial temple (**Ezek 48**)

The massive **wall of the city** was anchored by **twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**.

Those **stones** commemorate God's covenant relationship with the church, of which the apostles are the foundation (**Eph 2:20**)

At the top of each gate was the name of one of the tribes of Israel; at the bottom of each gate was the name of one of the apostles.

Thus, the layout of the city's gates pictures God's favor on all His redeemed people, both those under the old covenant, and those under the new covenant.

Then a curious thing occurred.

The angel **who spoke with John** had a **gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall**.

This interesting event is reminiscent of the measuring of the millennial temple (**Ezek 40:3**) and the measuring of the Tribulation temple (**11:1**).

The significance of all three measurements is that they mark out what belongs to God.

The results of the angel's measuring revealed that **the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles** (literally 1200 "stadia"; a "stadion", was about 607 feet, thus, the city walls are about 1,380 miles in each directions); **its length and width and height are equal**.

Next the angel measured the city's wall at seventy-two yards (most likely its thickness).

Then as if to emphasize that the city's dimensions are literal and not mystical, John adds the parenthetical footnote that those dimensions were given **according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.**

A yard is a yard, a foot is a foot, and a mile is a mile, whether for humans or angels.

The material that the massive city wall was made out of **was jasper**, the same diamond like stone mentioned in verse 11. Not only was the wall translucent, but also **the city itself was pure gold, like clear glass.**

The new Jerusalem's walls and buildings must be clear for the city to radiate the glory of God. Some may be concerned that the city's translucence will preclude any privacy. There will be nothing in heaven, however, that calls for privacy.

John next turns his attention in the vision to **the foundation stones of the city wall**, which he describes in amazing detail.

**They were adorned with every kind of precious stone**, twelve of which the apostle names.

The name of some of the stones have changed through the centuries, making their identification, uncertain. Eight of these stones were mounted on the high priest's breast piece. (*Ex. 28:17-20; 39:10-13*).

**The first foundation stone was jasper** which, as previously noted, is best identified as a diamond; **the second was sapphire**, a brilliant blue stone; **the third was chalcedony**, a agate stone from the Chalcedon region of what is now modern Turkey, sky blue in color with colored stripes; **the fourth was an emerald**, a bright green stone; **the fifth was sardius**, a common quartz stone found in various shades of red; **the seventh was chrysolite**, a transparent gold or yellow hued stone; **the eighth was beryl**, a stone found in various colors, including shades of green, yellow, and blue; **the ninth was topaz**, a yellow green stone; **the tenth was chrysoprase**, a gold tinted green stone; **the eleventh was jacinth**, a blue or violet colored stone in John's day, thought the modern equivalent is a red or reddish brown zircon; **the twelfth was amethyst**, a purple stone.

These brightly colored stones refract the shining brilliance of God's glory into a panoply of beautiful colors.

The scene was one of breathtaking beauty, a spectrum of dazzling colors flashing from the New Jerusalem throughout the re-created universe.

The next facet of the heavenly city that caught John's eye was **the twelve gates, which were twelve pearls**. Pearls were highly prized and a great value in John's day. But these **pearls** were like no pearl ever produced by an oyster, because **each one of the gates was a single gigantic pearl** nearly 1,400 miles high.

There is a spiritual truth illustrated by the fact that the **gates** were made of **pearls**, as *John Phillips* explains;

*How appropriate! All other precious gems are metals or stones, but a pearl is a gem formed within the oyster. The only one formed by a living creature.*

*The humble oyster receives an irritation or a wound and around the offending article that has penetrated and hurt it, the oyster builds a pearl.*

*The pearl we might say, is the answer of the oyster to that which injured it.*

*The Glory Land is God's answer, in Christ, to wicked men who crucified heaven's beloved and put him to open shame.*

*How like God it is to make the gates of the new Jerusalem of pearl.*

*The saints as they come and go will be forever reminded, as they pass the gates of glory, that access to God's home is only because of Calvary.*

*Think of the size of those gates! Think of the supernatural pearls from which they are made!  
What gigantic suffering is symbolized by those gates of pearl!*

*Throughout the endless ages we shall be reminded by those pearly gates of the immensity of the sufferings of Christ. Those pearls hung eternally at the access routes to glory, will remind us forever of One who hung upon a tree and whose answer to those who injured Him was to invite them to share His home. (Exploring Revelation, rev. ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint, Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 254)*