

THE BOOK OF REVELATION
"Holy Jerusalem: The Lamb's Wife"
Revelation 21:9-27

Introduction

1. A chronological order of events is given in the Book of Revelation (1:19). It is a two-fold division of the Book: 1. Events which were seen (1) and are (2, 3). 2. Events which are to take place "hereafter" (4-22). This chapter follows the age of grace, the tribulation, and the millennium. It describes items in eternity.

2. Already, the new heavens and the new earth have been noted (vv. 1, 2) and certain general conditions of eternity (vv. 3-7). Persons not qualified for eternal bliss are listed (v. 8). Eternity with God is a reserved arrangement and made this side of the afterlife. There are no alterations after death (Luke 16:19-31).

3. The Spirit of God records that a special angel is called to reveal truth concerning the new Jerusalem (v. 9). He is one of those previously employed as a divine messenger (16:1). The information granted is in sharp contrast with the harlot of Babylon (17:1-3) for it concerns the "bride, the Lamb's wife." Considering the city as of the people in it, it is the Lamb's wife (Church). Considering the city as a place, it is the Holy Jerusalem, built by Christ (John 14:3), and will be located on the new earth. This is the city for which Abraham looked (Heb. 11:10), for which saints have looked (Heb. 11:16) and which Christ promised (John 14:1-3).

4. Scripture reports John was to "come" (21:9) to be shown (δείξω deixo) the bride, the city by public demonstration. This was by the Holy Spirit (21:10). The city descended out of heaven as to place and from God as to person.

5. This is a literal city. God is the builder and He has everything necessary to build. True, the literal city "stands for the community formed by its inhabitants," but this does not mean that the material city and the inhabitants do not have an actual reality. Everything in the city affirms something about the varied display of God's nature, glory, and virtues.

6. Study the description of the city as given:

1. ITS EFFULGENCE vv. 11, 23, 25

The major thrust here concerns the light and glory of the city. "Having" (ἔχουσιν echousan) is present tense pointing to the continuous glory of the God in the city. His glory as such may denote the central attribute of God – His holiness (Isa. 6:3). Generally, God's glory speaks of the manifestation of His nature and character. Extrapolating on this, the text states that there is no created light (sun, moon) required (v. 23). The city has one perpetual day through the diffusion of divine light – God's glory and the Lamb's light. The light is so marvelous that it is compared to jasper, a precious gem which is crystal clear (cf. 4:3).

2. ITS MEASUREMENT VV. 15, 16

The city is tetragonal (KJV: foursquare) being a quadrilateral quadrangle. It is a huge solid cube stretching 1500 miles in every direction. So vast and perfect is the city conceived, it begs any architect or construction company. It would cover from Maine to Florida, from Atlantic to Colorado! Moreover, it will have streets over streets, stories over stories, up to a height of 1500 miles. This is stupendous!

3. ITS ENCLOSURE vv. 12, 17, 18

The wall seems disproportionate to the size of the city. It rises a mere 216 feet. Obviously God has arranged it this way "according to the measure of a man" which in fact is what the angel

said (v. 17). Security is not an issue here (cf. v. 25), but the glory of God is (v. 23). The wall is of jasper.

4. ITS FOUNDATIONS vv. 14, 19, 20

The names of the 12 apostles are linked with the 12 foundations of the wall. This relates to the Church and its origins (Eph. 2:20). These foundations will be "garnished" (κεκοσμημένοι kekosmemenoi, perfect passive) or adorned and embellished with a vast array of all sorts and sizes of gems of surpassing splendor. All these represent the variegated attributes of God as the foundation of the enormous city.

5. ITS ENTRANCE vv. 12, 13, 21

Similar to the foundations, there are 12 gates, three in each geographical direction. Here the names of the 12 tribes are marked. It shows the direct contact between the new earth and the new Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-24). This arrangement should be considered with the Lord's word (Mt. 19:28). Interestingly, angels still fulfill their roles as servants (Heb. 1:13, 14). Pearls are the dominant stone of the Gates. Obviously the common phrase "Pearly Gates" is at once Biblical and factual.

6. ITS CONSTRUCTION vv. 18, 21

Only once in this chapter is the idea of building recorded (v. 18). However, the city, walls, streets, foundations, gates are all built like transparent glass to reflect the beauty and glory of God. His attributes are given public display and brilliance. His total perfection is seen in the fullness of the city.

7. ITS ACTIVITIES vv. 22, 24, 26

a. Walking v. 24

The future tense (περιπατήσουσι peripatesousi) points to a delight to be experienced with all that God has in the city. It is a reminder of what God did with Adam (Gen. 3:8). What Enoch had with God will be an eternal experience for His own (Gen. 5:24). Fellowship is the accent here (cf. 1 John 1:7). Walking is a favorite word for the Christian (Eph. 4:1).

b. Worshipping v. 5

That there is no temple (v. 22) should not pose a problem. After all, the real temple – God Almighty and the Lamb – are present (vv. 3, 22). The Lamb will receive the highest honor and worship eternally. This, He deserves (Phil. 2:5-11). It may well be the meaning of the kings bringing their glory and honor into the city (vv. 24, 26). Whatever, the city will be the focal point for eternal worship.

c. Wandering v. 25

There is no thought of aimlessness in this, but a great deal of interrelationships will be experienced. Since the gates are never closed, there will be unending pilgrimages by the total redeemed population to this city. As the residence of God, the Lamb, and the Spirit, the city will never lose its attractiveness.

Conclusion As in the previous section (vv. 1-8), God concludes by telling about those who will never be allowed in this city. It is both a warning and an assurance. Those excluded are absolutely kept out as the double negative expressed by in "nowise" (οὐ μή ου με) avers. The groups are: 1) The defilers. This word means the unclean or common (κοινοῦν koinoun). 2) The abominators (βδέλυγμα bdelugma). This has reference to those who make common the things of God. 3) The liars (ψεῦδος pseudos). These are the untruthful. The connection of this list with a previous one (v. 8) is patent. Who then will be there? Only those whose names stand written (perfect passive voice γεγραμμένον gegrammenon) in the book of life, a record book of the redeemed (cf. 20:12). Oh, is YOUR name written forever in that book? Be sure!