

# The New Jerusalem

## Revelation 21 Notes

### ***The New Jerusalem Introduced (vss. 1-8)***

- The concept of a new heavens and earth at the passing of a former one is familiar in the Old Testament (cf. Isaiah 51:4-6; 65:17). Although Isaiah was writing of the new dispensation under Christ, John and Peter (2 Peter 3:7) were both writing of the final judgment and what would follow.
- The "new Jerusalem" is new in kind, superior to that which preceded it. As the present order has its holy city, Jerusalem (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22), so does the new heavens and new earth have a new city. The fact that it comes down out of heaven shows its divine origin. The city is arrayed in bridal splendor having been made ready (19:8; cf. Ephesians 5:25-27).
- John brings together a number of symbols familiar to the Bible. The church is a bride, a sanctuary, a family and a body of individuals. The development of God's presence among His people now reaches its zenith as He dwells or tabernacles with them in His heavenly fellowship (John 1:14). The "peoples" simply describe His people from among all the peoples of earth who now share a perfect fellowship with God.
- The bliss of being with God is described by five negatives: no tears, no death, no mourning, no crying and no pain. These are no more, because sin which caused them is no more; sin and death are swallowed up in victory. The grandeur of the "all things made new" will surely surpass and exceed anything that our imaginations can conceive.
- The scheme of redemption and its revelation originate and terminate with God. This claim is verified by the fulfilling and consummation of His purpose in Christ, for only an infinite being could have so accurately foretold and carried out such a plan. Nothing will be lacking in the complete fullness and realization of all spiritual desires of the glorified soul in heaven.
- Vs. 7 is an assurance of an eternal relationship with God, like that of a son receiving the inheritance which has been guaranteed to him (Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:14).
- In contrast to the inheritance of the righteous, the Lord now describes the character and destiny of the wicked. This serves as a warning to those who are living, for after death it is too late to make any correction of life. In contrast to the saints' heavenly inheritance,

the wicked suffer the second death in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

### ***The Exterior Of The City (vss. 11-21)***

- The judgment of the harlot and the marriage of the bride are set forth in clear and vivid contrast, as have been the seductive lusts of the one and the beauty and holiness of the other; each has been represented by strong symbols.
- Instead of seeing a beautiful woman attired in bridal garments as would be expected, he is shown the holy city coming down out of heaven. As the harlot was symbolized by a great city, the bride is signified by a holy city. John sees the city, the church, in its final glory at home with God and the Lamb.
- The thought being emphasized in this section is that the city is made glorious by the glory of God which fills it (cf. Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11). Jasper, absolutely flawless and as clear as crystal, expresses the perfect illumination of the holy city.
- In John's day no city could endure without a strong wall for protection. The wall symbolizes the picture of absolute and perfect security of those within the city and of their complete and unassailable fellowship with God. It is probable that the twelve angels at the gates symbolize the completed work of angelic ministering spirits.
- With gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes and the foundation stones bearing the names of the twelve apostles, the churches of the Old and New Covenants are thus united into one, bring all redeemed into one eternal home. Twelve symbolizes the full number of the apostles who serve the Lamb, just as twelve indicates the full number of the tribes of Israel.
- The size of the city staggers the imagination. The size and shape of the measured city symbolizes a great and marvelous holy place into which the faithful priests of the earth will eventually enter and offer sacrifices of praise to their God.
- Paul's words describing the mystery of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 2:9 could likewise be said of that which God has in store for those who are prepared for it. John gives a fuller description of the foundation by naming the most precious stones known to the world at that time (some of which cannot be identified today). The ancients esteemed pearls, which were often highly lustrous, white or variously colored. There is simply nothing in the universe to which the holy city can be compared.

### ***The Interior Of The City (vss. 22-27)***

- The glory of God's being and presence fills the city. The promise of

3:12 is now completely fulfilled; those who have overcome are permanent worshipers within the sanctuary of the divine presence.

- From the beginning, God's presence among His people has been developed step by step, each concept of His presence being gradually greater. His glory, which the Jews call the "Shekinah," filled the tabernacle and temple. His glory is in the church by His spirit, and now that glory is full and complete as He and the Lamb fill the new temple.
- Beginning at 6:15 and extending throughout the remainder of the book, the kings, those who are in league with Satan and who stand in opposition to the Lamb, are finally destroyed in 19:18-21. When the light appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, men from every nation came to it. Since all civil kingdoms and political kings have come to an end, there are none to challenge or share God's glory; whatever glory these had possessed or claimed is now laid at the feet of Him who is Almighty.
- The gates of God's city under Christ have always been open to all who would enter. This admission and acceptance of all who would come reveals clearly the mercy and grace of God bestowed in love upon any person of any nation. Since all enemies had now been cast into the lake of fire, there was no occasion to shut the gates, in the way the city gates of the world had been shut at night. Furthermore, there is no night in the celestial city; there is one eternal day.
- All the glory and the honor sought or achieved by these redeemed out of the nations shall be brought into the city. When we consider that which is outside the city, we realize that all glory and honor is to be found in the spiritual city of God; only dishonor and shame are to be found outside of it.
- When the saints enter, only those fitted for such a life shall be there. Nothing defiled, impure or polluted will exist in heaven. All that is contrary to the holiness that God demands and all who live after such a standard shall be outside.