

“The New Jerusalem”

Revelation 21:9-14, 22-27

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Introduction:

Even if you have never seen the movie, if you find someone saying, “There’s no place like home,” and they begin to click their heels together, you know to immediately apply the reference to *The Wizard of Oz*. And, quite often when you hear the phrase *the pearly gates*, many immediately apply the reference to our new heavenly home.

But, there is so much more to it than just pearly gates. In this lesson we get to delve even deeper into the visions of John as he writes to reveal the wondrous truth to us of that great city of God; our desired destination to dwell in for eternity.

Once Jesus said, “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you,” (John 14:2). There is a solid future prepared for those who are in Christ Jesus and picking up in the immediate verse following last week’s lesson, today’s lesson allows us to see a bit more.

Revelation 21:9 “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

While the book of Revelation is filled with glorious promises it’s also filled with judgment. Judgment on unrepented sin, peoples, nations, and the enemy of our soul and his legions. During the seven years of tribulation these judgments came symbolized as seals, trumpets, and vials which poured out the wrath of God on the evil that was still present in the world.

One of the angels from those last seven plagues/judgements (see Revelation 15:1), also known as the time of “Jacob’s trouble” (see Jeremiah 30:7) because of its severity, comes and speaks to the apostle John, saying, **“Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (see Revelation 19:7).**

The phrase **“the Lamb”** has been referenced to and has been prophesied of the Christ:

- Speaking of the Messiah to come, Isaiah prophesied, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his

mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter . . .”
(Isaiah 53:7).

- Peter saw Him as “a lamb without blemish and without spot,” (1Peter 1:19).
- In earlier chapters of this same book John saw Him as the “Lamb” that had been “slain,” and yet the only one “worthy to take the book, and to open the seals,” (Revelation 5:6-14).
- In 1 Corinthians 5:7 He is seen as our “Passover” sacrifice (which was a lamb).

All of these images portray images of sacrifice, blood being shed, and atonement that offers deliverance. No matter how you look at it the “**Lamb**” is clearly represented as our Lord Jesus Christ who died, rose, and ascended in victory to go to heaven before us as our forerunner. Here, His bride (Revelation 21:2) is ready to be presented.

Revelation 21:10 “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

“He carried me away in the spirit.” Continuing to unveil the Revelation mysteries before his eyes, John’s heavenly guide captures him and whisks him away to allow him a deeper view into the some of the specifics of **“that great city, the holy Jerusalem.”**

Now the history of the old **“Jerusalem”** is littered with sin, wars, ravages of kings, besiegement’s, captivities, loss of promises, broken walls, burnt city, defilement, and the list goes on and on. More often than not the city strayed from its representation of God’s design for it. But, as the book of Hebrews reminds us of those who live and die in faith, “They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: *for he hath prepared for them a city,*” (11:16; emphasis mine). Here, in John’s vision we see **“the holy city, descending out of heaven from God.”**

Revelation 21:11 “Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.”

In this verse I want us to focus on a much overlooked word: **“having.”** **“Having”** implies ownership and possessing always; it singles out to me the permanence of the subject being stated here, which is **“the glory of God,”** pictured as never being removed from it. There is never a time when this New Jerusalem will lack God’s glory from being manifested within it (as opposed to the old Jerusalem’s past record of having God’s glory leave it; see Ezekiel 11:23).

“Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” By using the wording **“a stone most precious . . . clear as crystal”** in trying to describe the

“light” he saw radiating from that beautiful city, I imagine John struggled to even begin to compare its luster with something the human mind can conceive and call valuable.

Can you imagine a rare and precious gem the size of a city as the one being described here, with the glory of God shining through it projecting its radiance and brilliance farther and brighter and more magnificent than any eye could ever think to see or mind fathom? To John, this is how he sees the beauty of that holy city. It’s the only way he could come up with describe it: radiant, clear and priceless. One will never see beauty like that in any other place. No earthly thing can compare or even begin to truly describe the preciousness found there.

Revelation 21:12-14 “And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

Upon further inspection of this magnificent heavenly city, John’s eye catches some of the specifics of it. One of the things he notices is it **“had a wall great and high.”** For many cities, particularly in ancient times, walls were one of the greatest defenses a city could have. It protects against possible invaders

and allows soldiers to perch high upon it to watch out for and to fight against enemies who would think to take it. It's built usually around the main part in an effort to keep the people therein and the royalty safe from potential hazards of any outward uprisings against it.

Think if you will of The Great Wall of China which has been listed as at one time to be among the 7 Wonders of the World or the New 7 Wonders of the World (see resources such as Wikipedia). It was a massive undertaking which took centuries to build, rebuild, and maintain. Millions gather to see this impressive feat yet it pales in comparison to the **“wall great and high”** John sees in that New Jerusalem.

“And had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels.”

Despite the massiveness of the walls presented there (read Revelation 21:15-21 for further measurements), here we see guarded gates as well.

Of the **“gates”** first we are told there are **“twelve”** of them and upon each one of them is written **“the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.”** Many have written and taught of the importance of this because it links those under the old covenant with the glorious that lies ahead in the future to all who adhered to God's Word and believed.

Posted at the **“gates”** are **“angels.”** Immediately when I read this my mind went to the time when God evicted Adam and Eve

from the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3:24 tells us, “He drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” God put an angelic guard in the way to prevent access. It’s like the sheriff who seals the doors after an eviction. What once was their possession was now unlawful for them to own. They would not be allowed to trespass.

One might view these angels on post to guard and protect this holy city from trespassers as well that nothing or nobody that is not supposed to be there will gain entrance (although all evil is banished).

“On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.” With **“three gates”** on each side of the wall (**north, south, east, and west**) we see the city taking shape in our mind’s eye as a sort of square structure. I imagine people from all areas, directions, and nations of the redeemed being drawn to this heavenly city.

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” As with the twelve gates, the **“twelve foundations”** stand to represent something special as well. **“Foundations”** are what things are built upon and here these foundations represent the **“twelve apostles of the Lamb”** (compare to what Paul taught in

Ephesians 2:20 in regard to the apostles and how it shows Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone). Many see this as the link between the old and the new covenants people of the redeemed coming together in glory. Also, many want to discuss exactly who the twelfth apostle is but I will leave that up to God because He already knows and has it founded for that future.

Revelation 21:22 “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.”

An actual stone upon stone building of worship is not present there. But what, or I should rather say, whom, is there is **“the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb”** who are themselves the **“temple.”**

In last week’s lesson, in discussing being in the presence of God, I talked about our access to Him being unhindered without any barriers. Here, we see the same for worship because His presence so permeates that heavenly place. Worship in heaven is going to be unlike any experience you have ever seen, felt, or experienced here on this earth. I don’t care how hot the service was (as some refer to it when they have an awesome worship experience); nothing or no one could even begin to wrap their human minds around the concept of what it will be like when **“God Himself and the Lamb”** are the actual **“temple.”** See, this is why when you

worship now you better make sure it's Him you are worshipping as opposed to anything else.

Currently speaking our edifice is under construction and has been for the last year and a half with many more months of waiting for renovations to be completed and custom furniture to be made. We have been in our basement worshipping and holding services during the process in closed in and confined quarters (this is not a dig on or a comparison of worshipping environments for I know many faithful saints round the world gather in many adverse, harsh, or less than conditions – it's just part of a story to tell). Many are eager to get back to our main sanctuary. The longer the renovations go on the more the anticipation mounts.

But oh, in that day when the need for the physical **“temple”** be removed I believe all God's people are going to cut a holy step when they behold **“God and the Lamb”** as the temple. Now, that's true, unhindered worship! Can you anticipate that?!

Revelation 21:23 “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

When Jesus was transfigured before the eyes of the watching Peter, James and John, the Bible lets us know, “His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as light,” (Matthew 17:2). This was just a small example of the true nature of His

glory that He continually held within Himself even while here on earth. I can only imagine, and the Word concurs, in that day, and in that **“city”** the brilliance of He and the Father so overruns and outshines any illuminating resource that there was no need to have it present any longer.

“For the glory of God did lighten it.” The imagery presented here leaves the human mind struggling to fully explain and grasp the power present in His **“glory.”** The awesomeness of it cannot be condensed in the human language but must be felt by faith in the believing heart that long for it. The psalmist sung of it when he wrote, “For the LORD God is a sun and shield . . .” (Psalm 84:11). And, the prophesy of Isaiah foretells as well about the need for no more sun or moon and declares, “. . . But the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory,” (60:19). As the “everlasting light” He can never be extinguished and will always be available to shine for His people in His city.

“And the Lamb is the light thereof.” The same brilliance is applied to the **“Lamb”** as well. Jesus spoke in the book of John, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life,” (8:12). There will be no need for the physical sun that we have become so accustomed to rising and setting each day, for He, the Son is the **“light.”**

Revelation 21:24-26 “And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.”

“**Nations**” represent people from all over the world; all ethnicities, backgrounds, socioeconomic status, Gentiles, etc. Not just the Jewish people but there will be people from all walks of life who will be “**saved;**” redeemed and delivered to join Him in that heavenly abode. “All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name,” (Psalm 86:9; see also Ps. 22:27, Is. 60:3, Ep. 3:6).

Those and their “**kings**” who were once scattered and divided by countries and borders come together for the commonality of worshiping the true and righteous King. “And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God,” (Luke 13:29).

“**Shall walk in the light of it.**” This brings back memories of the hymns the mothers of the church used to sing such as *Jesus, the Light of the World* where the refrain simply declares:

“We’ll walk in the light, beautiful light,

Come where the dew-drops of mercy are bright;

Shine all around us by day and by night,

Jesus, the light of the world,” (Hymn Source: Hymnary.org)

There, we will walk in the radiance of all His glory and bask in the glow of God!

“And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it” (also vs. 26 of our lesson). This is why we would do well to remember that any **“glory”** anyone supposes to have now is of God and God retains all rights to His **“glory.”** “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another . . .” (Isaiah 42:8). God will be honored! God will be forever praised! God gets all the glory!

“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.” In the ancient times, for cities that had these great walls, the gates thereof would be closed at nighttime for the safety and protection of the residents therein from marauders and those with bad intentions. But, in that New Jerusalem not only is there no evil to fear, there is also an elimination of **“night”** (God and the Lamb are shining brightly forevermore), along with angels posted at each entrance, this erases the need to have closed gates.

With all evil done away with and every obstacle and hindrance we have experienced in this world removed, the believers; the redeemed will have free, uninhibited access to God.

Revelation 21:27 “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

As with the last verse of last week’s lesson (Revelation 21:8) we see here that not everybody will be allowed entrance into those pearly gates. Anything and anyone related to sin and wrong doing, all evil will be done away with.

It has been made very clear our eternity is not bound up here rather we are pressing toward the goal of heaven. How we live matters! Talk is cheap! We won’t have to answer for anybody but ourselves. A lot of works carried out by men and woman today will not see the light of heaven tomorrow. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God,” (1 Cor. 6:9-10, KJV). Not on this list or the one above? It doesn’t matter. If is not born again then they will not walk the streets of glory (see

John 3:5). Only the righteous will inhabit that holy city; only **“they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”**

Conclusion:

Live your life today that would allow access to that holy city in that day.

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