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The New Jerusalem

Series: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

October 10, 2021

Revelation 21.9-27

I. **Context**

A. Prologue

1. **Revelation 1:7-8** (NASB95) — 7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

B. **Theme**

1. **Jesus Christ is coming**
 - a. Tribes of earth will mourn over Him
 - b. Eschatological triumph of Christ over the anti-Christian forces of evil in the world and in the heavenly realms
2. **Purpose – encourage the churches under great pressure**
 - a. Series: Between Rock and a Hard Place

C. How is this purpose accomplished?

1. **Four visions**
 - a. **“In the Spirit”**
2. **Revelation 1:9-10**
 - a. **First vision**
 - (1) The glorified Christ
 - (2) The messages to the seven churches
3. **Revelation 4:1-2**
 - a. **Second vision**
 - (1) The heavenly vision
 - (2) The tribulation
4. **Revelation 17:1-3**
 - a. **Third vision**
 - (1) The mystery of Babylon
 - (2) Judgment of Babylon
 - (3) Coming of Christ
 - (4) Millennium
 - (5) Final triumph and consummation
5. **Revelation 21:9-10**
 - a. **Fourth vision**
 - (1) The New Jerusalem

D. Last Vision – expanded view of New Jerusalem

II. **The Bride, the Wife of the Lamb**

- A. **Revelation 21:9–14** (NASB95) —
1. 9 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.”
 2. 10 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, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.
 3. 12 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.
 4. 13 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.
 5. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
- B. **Vision introduced**
1. Cf 17.1 (3rd vision)
 - a. Angel from the same group
 - b. Wording is the same
 2. Contrast with presentation of Babylon (Ch 17)
 - a. City of man v. City of God
 3. New Jerusalem is bride, wife of the Lamb
 - a. Jews looked at bride and wife as the same
 - b. Obviously, **The Church**
 4. Carried away in the Spirit
 - a. Marks the beginning of the new vision
 5. Great and high mountain
 - a. Don't have identification for this mountain
 - b. But an excellent perspective to observe the magnificence of the New Jerusalem
 - c. Has to be an incredible mountain to get a perspective of this New Jerusalem
 6. Coming down out of heaven
 - a. City of God (not City of Man)
 - b. Church having been resurrected, transformed
 - c. Now descends to an earthly eternity
- C. **Infrastructure**
1. **Shone with glory of God**
 - a. Culmination of entire process of relationship between God and man
 - (1) Israel to behold the glory of God
 - (2) NT believers participate in the glory of God
 - (a) **Colossians 1:27** (NASB95) — 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

- (b) **1 Peter 5:1** (NASB95) — 1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed...
- (c) **2 Peter 1:4** (NASB95) — 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.
- (3) Now glory fully displayed in the church
- b. Brilliance as clear jasper
 - (1) Not as clearly defined as today's jasper – which is an opaque quartz
 - (2) Any clear jewel – possibly diamond
- c. Wall with 12 gates
 - (1) Names of the tribes of Israel
- d. 12 Foundations
 - (1) Names of apostles of the Lamb
 - (2) Difficult to conceive of 12 foundations; flexibility of apocalyptic language
 - (3) Foundations are not usually visible, but this is worth seeing!
 - (4) Symbolic significance – meant to teach us something more than about the superstructure of the building
- e. Gates with tribes of Israel; foundations with apostles
 - (1) Final identification of church and Israel
 - (2) Saints in the OT and the NT are understood as one body
- f. **Ephesians 2:19–22** (NASB95) — 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
- g. This passage in Revelation is a vivid depiction of the spiritual reality described in Ephesians

III. **The Measurement of the City**

- A. **Revelation 21:15–17** (NASB95) —
 - 1. 15 The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.
 - 2. 16 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.
 - 3. 17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements.
- B. **Measuring rod of gold**

1. Not used as projection of judgment as elsewhere in Scripture or in Revelation
 2. Used to display the city's magnificence
 3. **Gold = perfection**
 - a. Not just the city itself, but even its measuring rod!
- C. **Cubic construction** – unusual!
- D. **Extraordinary dimensions**
1. 1,500 miles in every direction!
 - a. Half the width of USA
 - b. Extending high as well as length and width
 - c. Needing to be on a high mountain to gain perspective
 2. Width of walls – over 200 feet thick
 3. Makes the Palestinian temple seem almost microscopic by comparison
- IV. **The Material of the City**
- A. **Revelation 21:18–21** (NASB95) —
1. 18 The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
 2. 19 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; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.
 3. 21 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.
- B. **Walls of jasper**
1. Imagine the clarity of that structure
- C. **City of gold**, clear as glass
1. Not an earthly material
 2. Gold is not clear
 3. Expression of extreme purity
- D. **Foundations represented by different stones**
1. Some of which we don't know about
 2. No specific references to meanings here – just adds to the glory and beauty of the structure
- E. **Gates were pearls**
1. Imagine the size of the pearls compared our earthly pearls!
- F. **Great street** – gold, clear as glass
1. Again, not an earthly substance
 2. Not necessarily one street – symbolic of the city
- V. **Its Moral Quality**
- A. **Revelation 21:22–27** (NASB95) —
1. 22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
 2. 23 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.

3. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.
 4. 25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; 26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 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.
- B. **No temple** – Lord God and Lamb are temple
1. Temple = dwelling place of God
 2. Not the dwelling of God is with men
 3. Church now is in the immediate presence of God
 - a. Cf “mediate” presence – burning bush
 - b. Nothing mediating God's presence
 - c. Nothing that we need our senses to mediate
- C. **Glory of God shines** through the Lamb
1. Nothing more to hide His glory
 2. No imperfection; no sin; no idolatrous impulses; no distractions
- D. **Nations, kings, and the light of the glory of God**
1. Not indicating the millennial kingdom with others outside as mixed population
 2. Indication of the character of the church
 - a. All nations, peoples, etc.
- E. **Gates never shut**
1. Shut gates at night for fear of intruders
 2. Evil loves the darkness
 3. Never more any need for that – no night!
- F. **Nothing impure will ever enter**
1. Simple statement that only the redeemed are part of this eternal city
- G. Cf **Ezekiel 36-48** – same basic structure as Revelation
1. **36-37 – Salvation of Israel restored to land**
 2. **38-39 – Messianic kingdom** is not the end
 - a. Disturbed by war led by Gog and Magog
 3. **40-48 – Divine victory** brings new eternal order
 - a. Rebuilt temple in new Jerusalem
 4. Similarities of rebuilt temple
 - a. Ezekiel 40.3 – temple measured
 - b. Glory filled the temple
 - c. Never again sinfulness in temple
 - d. River from temple
 - e. Gates – names of 12 tribes
 5. Rebuilt temple in Ezekiel – fulfilled in the New Jerusalem

VI. Implications

- A. Unity of the saints
- B. Incredible size of the church
 1. Church of the centuries, OT and NT

- C. Fulfillment of moral quality for which we gain just a foretaste today
- D. Impossible for us to imagine experiencing God unmediated
 - 1. 1 John 3:2 (NASB95) — 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.
 - 2. Our eyes will not be required for seeing