

God Redeems “the Holy City”

Part 2 “The New Jerusalem”

Revelation 21-22



A New Heaven and a New Earth

Revelation 21: ¹ Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,”¹ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’² or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

⁶ He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

The New Jerusalem

- Jewish Tradition:
 - “Decent” established by God not human effort
 - The Imagery of God’s Throne
 - Gold and jeweled construction
 - Seeing the face of God
 - Golden streets, gates of pearl
 - List of jewels
- The Roman aspirations for the Ideal city
 - Heroditus description of Babylon

¹ Isaiah 65:17

² Isaiah 25:8

- Rome’s proud claim to be the Eternal City

In the End, God...

- God is the End! (cf. 1Cor. 15:28, God will be “all in all”)
- “God’s dwelling with humanity” (21:3; cf. Ezekiel 48:35)
- No Temple (follows the pattern of Ezekiel 40-48)
- “Holy of Holies” → The Entire City! 21:15-16; 1 Kings:6:20; II Chron. 3:8-9)
- God is the Temple (21:22)
- Jasper → God’s Glory surrounds the city (see Rev. 4:3; Zech 2:4-5)

Via Negativa

- We cannot say what the transcendent world IS, so we have to use language to say what it IS NOT.
- No Sea (21:1 cf. 4:6; 13:1 Gen 1:1)
- No Tears, Death, Sorrow, Crying, Pain (21:4)
 - Reversal of the Consequences of the Fall
 - “former things” “passed away”
 - Fulfilling, joy, abundant life
- No cowardly, faithless, polluted, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, or liars.
 - Right and Justice prevail
 - “vice catalogue” like others³ Cowardice and Liars (Yielding to Persecution and Pressure of roman courts)
 - Sorcery and Idolatry (pagan cultic practices)
 - Exhortation to be faithful Now!
 - Characterizes life in the city not who will finally be there.

³ (Rom. 1:28-32; 13:13; or. 5:9-11; 6:9-10; II Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:31; 5:3-5; Col. 3:5, 8-9; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 6:4-5; 2 Tim. 3:2-5; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 4:3; mark 7:21-23; Luke 18:11; cf. Rev. 9:21; 22:15)

The New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb

⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. ¹⁶ The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia⁴ in length, and as wide and high as it is long. ¹⁷ The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits⁵ thick. ⁶ ¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ⁷ ²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

⁴ That is, about 1,400 miles or about 2,200 kilometers

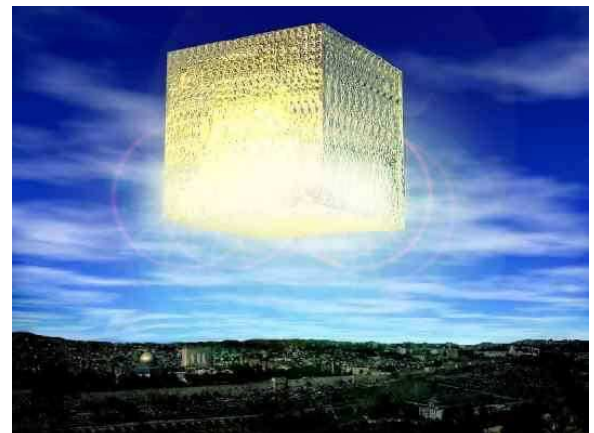
⁵ That is, about 200 feet or about 65 meters

⁶ Or *high*

⁷ The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain.

The City of God

- A City
 - Garden of Eden, Gen 2
 - The first city was built by Cain
 - Babylon, Gen 11
 - “Twelve”
- “Jerusalem” Isa. 49:16
- A beloved, beautiful, bridal, city
 - Israel /People of God/ Church Isa. 49:14-23; 54; Zech. 9:9-10; John 3:29-30; II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32
- A renewed City
 - God does not make all new things but “all things new”
 - “Tree of Life (Gen. 2:9)
 - “River of Life (Gen. 2:10)
- A big, universal city
 - Number of the redeemed is “uncountable” (7:9-17)
 - Vast: 1500 miles cubed
 - Nations, kings (21:24-26)
 - Grove of the tree of life for healing of the “nations” (Ezekiel 47:12)
 - Twelve Gates with One way traffic
- A Holy City
 - Romans 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:16-18
- An Active City
 - Worship and Service (22:3)
 - Reigning (22:5)



²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22:¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

More Via Negativa – Creation Developed and Redeemed

- No Temple (21:22)
- No Sun, Moon, night, Closed Gates (21:23, 25; 22:5)
 - Un-Creation (Gen. 1)
 - The gates are always open
- Nothing Impure will enter it
 - Barriers to the “Holy” sections of the Temple in the OT
 - Only the “those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of Life.”
- No Curse (22:3)

- Gen 3:1-6; Isa. 24:4-6; rom. 5:12-21
- Curse on the earth Gen 3:17; Rom. 8:18-25
- Beauty of this world must be transformed “transparent gold” and “crystallizing” jasper
- A living city with light and color contrast with Babylon’s dead silent streets (18:22)

- The Imperative Question: How is your life oriented?



John and the Angel

Revelation 22 ⁶ The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

⁷ “Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹ But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!”

¹⁰ Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. ¹¹ Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”

Epilogue: Invitation and Warning

¹² “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

¹⁴ “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God

will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

The Vision Ends

- “Worship God!”
- Sacred Revelation
- Invitation for Faithful response:
 - Come!
 - Take
 - The Free Gift of the Water of Life (Ezek. 47; John 7:37-39)
- “I am coming soon”

The Letter Ends