

“ATTRACTIONS TO ETERNITY”

REVELATION 21:9-21

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

[Medley of Songs—sing; “Glory! I’m going there!]

Like a travel brochure that excites interest in a far-away land and causes tourists to want to go there.

Heb. 13:14: “For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.”

Heb. 12:22: “But you have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels....”

This city is identical with the one of 21:2—cf. 9b & 10 b: “the bride, the wife of the Lamb...the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.”

- This city is not a millennial Jerusalem; it is not an earthly scene with an orbiting New Jerusalem.
- John uses earthly language and idiom to describe Jerusalem of the eternal order.
- The description here is different from Ezekiel’s description in 40-48 and other OT scenes of the Millennium.

We must **literally interpret** this passage. Some are critical of the idea of a “materialistic” view of Heaven; then they spiritualize this passage and make it apply to the Church of the present.

[Quote Seiss, p. 493]

AFTER SEEING THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY, YOU WILL DO ALL TO MAKE SURE YOU GET THERE AND TO PREPARE TO ENJOY IT TO THE FULLEST!

I. THE GUIDE TO THE CITY (9)

- The interpreting angel—one of those with the bowl judgment—what a paradox!
- The same one that had shown John the harlot city of 17:1—what a contrast with the harlot city is this “Bride, the wife of the Lamb!
- The title “the Bride, the wife of the Lamb represents the people of God as in this city—the city reflects the inhabitants.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CITY (10)

- The conditions reflected are those of a prophet in an ecstatic condition—“in spirit” or “the Spirit”.
- A high mountain—in order to get a good view!
- The city is “holy” due to God’s presence; “heavenly” in its origin; from God—it has a godly purpose. See Heb. 11:10—its “builder and maker is God!”

III. THE SECURITY OF THE CITY (12-14)

- It is not that any enemies still exist!
 - The purpose of these walls and gates is more as boundary markers, containment, and confidence for God’s people.
- A. Great and High Walls (12) [v. 17 is likely a reference to the width of the wall]
- B. Twelve gates—abundant and easy access (cf. Ezek. 48:31ff—there the tribes go out to their land; here the nations come into the city.
- C. Twelve angels at the gates (cf. Is. 62:6—watchmen on the walls during millennium)
- Note that St. Peter is not at the pearly gates!
- D. Twelve foundation stones
- All of this shows:
- Perfect security and peace

- Exclusion of all things undesirable.
- Perfect peace forever

IV. THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY (12b, 14b)

A. The twelve Tribes of Israel (12b—names written on the gates)

Cf. Mt. 8:11—the same status of Jews and Gentiles.

Heb. 11:10—Abraham sought for a city; 11:16—the patriarchs desired a better country.

Heb. 12:22—the Heavenly Jerusalem

B. The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb (14b—names written on the 12 foundations)

- Cf. Eph. 2:20—foundational authority of the apostles
- The backgrounds of Israel and the Church are remembered, but the privileges are the same!
- Differences between Israel and the Church are **dispensational**, not eternal. Both OT and NT saints compose the Bride of Christ as reflected in this city.

V. THE SIZE OF THE CITY (15-17)—almost 1400 miles (1363)!

- Note the “gold standard” of measurement—the reed used.
- The entire structure measured—the city, gates, and walls.

A. The Measuring rod (15)

B. The Shape (16)

- A cube—cf. the holy of holies.
- Symmetry, perfection, vastness, and completeness
- 12,000 stadia; each stadia = about 600 ft.
- This number is 12×10^3 = a perfect total of God’s people
- There is room for you!

C. The Wall’s Thickness (17)

- 144 cubits = 72 yards.
- Human measurements = angelic measurements

VI. THE BEAUTY OF THE CITY (11, 18-21)

- “Note “the glory of God” (v. 11)
- She is a “luminary” [literally a “star, radiance, brilliance”]—v. 11; it sparkles, shines, glows with God’s glory.

A. The Wall—crystal clear jasper (11, 18; cf. Is. 54:11ff—note the precious stones of “her wall”)

- Very costly
- Transparency—manifesting God’s glory (see Rev. 4:3 where He is compared to a jasper).
- God has nothing to hide!

B. The City and Streets (18b, 21b)—pure gold like clear or transparent glass.

- No impurity
- Splendor
- Beauty
- No one is out of the view of Jesus!

C. The Foundation Stones (19-20)—“every kind of precious stone”

1. Jasper (translucent green)
2. Sapphire (deep blue with spangles of iron pyrite)
3. Chalcedony (green silicate of copper)
4. Emerald (green stone)
5. Sardonyx (layered or red and white)

6. Sardius (blood red)
 7. Chrysolite (yellow or golden)
 8. Beryl (green—sea green)
 9. Topaz (greenish gold or yellow)
 10. Chrysoprase (pale green)
 11. Jacinth (bluish purple)
 12. Amethyst (purple quartz)
 - In all this description we see **infinite beauty** and **immeasurable wealth**.
 - Cf. the stones in the breastplate of the High Priest.
 - All of God's people are here; all with priestly privileges.
 - All God's people are His precious jewels, and reflect His glory!
- D. The Gates (21)—*12 single pearls* [**illus.—the formation of a pearl**]

CONCLUSION

"He the pearly gates will open"!

Will you enter in?

Are you preparing?