

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 21 (PART 2)

REVELATION 21:1-4 - NEW CITY COMING DOWN

REVELATION 21:5-8 - CONTRASTS

OVERCOMERS/THOSE WHO THIRST: DRINKS FROM THE SPRINGS OF THE WATER OF LIFE (V. 6), INHERITANCE OF THINGS LISTED HERE, GOD AS THEIR FATHER, CHILDREN OF GOD

COWARDLY, UNBELIEVING, ABOMINABLE, MURDERERS, IMMORAL PERSONS, SORCERERS, IDOLATERS AND ALL LIARS - "THEIR PART" (WHAT THEY RECEIVE/INHERIT/GAIN) IS IN THE LAKE OF FIRE (THE SECOND DEATH).

REVELATION 21:9-14 - THE NEW JERUSALEM

V. 9-10 - ANGELS REASSIGNED - ONE OF THE ANGELS JOHN HAD PREVIOUSLY SEEN POINT OUT THE WRATH OF GOD IS NOW, FROM A GREAT AND HIGH PLACE, ABLE TO SHOW JOHN THE "BRIDE OF THE LAMB" AND THE NEW JERUSALEM COMING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD.

JOHN IS GOING TO TRY AND DESCRIBE WHAT HE SEES IN A WAY THAT THE READER CAN UNDERSTAND. BUT NOTICE THERE ARE A FEW TIMES HE SAYS "LIKE", INDICATING THAT HE'S DOING HIS BEST TO RECORD WHAT HE SEES BUT HUMAN LANGUAGE IS LIKELY LIMITED IN ITS ABILITY TO DO IT JUSTICE. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE INVITED TO JOIN JOHN IN THE GLORIOUS GLIMPSE HE IS GIVEN OF THE CITY OF GOD.

THE CITY DESCRIBED:

1. HOLY CITY (V. 10)
2. COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD (V. 10)
3. HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD (V. 11)
4. BRILLIANCE WAS LIKE A *COSZY*STONE - CRYSTAL CLEAR JASPER (V. 11)
5. GREAT AND HIGH WALL (V. 12)
6. TWELVE GATES WITH THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL ON EACH GATE (V. 12)
7. THERE IS AN ANGEL AT EACH OF THE GATES (V. 12)
8. IT SEEMS LIKE THE CITY IS A SQUARE WITH 3 GATES ON EACH SIDE (NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST)
9. THE GREAT WALL HAS TWELVE "FOUNDATION STONES" OR "FOUNDATIONS" (ESV, CSB, NIV, ETC) WITH THE NAMES OF JESUS' TWELVE APOSTLES WRITTEN ON THESE FOUNDATIONS. (V. 14)

THUS FAR WE HAVE A PICTURE OF THIS CITY THAT IS GLORIOUS AND BRILLIANT. IN ADDITION WE OUGHT TO SEE THAT THIS FINAL CITY BRINGS TOGETHER THE OLD TESTAMENT (12 TRIBES), THE NEW TESTAMENT (12 APOSTLES) AS WELL AS THE SPIRITUAL REALM (12 ANGELS). THE SEPARATION OF THE "REALMS" THAT WE LOOKED AT LAST TIME HAS BEEN ERASED.

REVELATION 21:15-17 - THE MEASUREMENTS OF THE CITY

EZEKIEL 40 RECORDS THE PROPHET EZEKIEL BEING TAKEN TO A PLACE TO SEE AND DESCRIBE THE FUTURE CITY GOD'S PEOPLE WOULD DWELL IN. HE WAS LIVING IN A TIME OF EXILE AND GOD WAS SHOWING A NEW JERUSALEM THAT WOULD BE BUILT, TO GIVE HOPE TO GOD'S PEOPLE THAT THEY WOULD ONE DAY RETURN AND DWELL SAFELY AGAIN. WITH THIS IN VIEW, JOHN DESCRIBES HIS EXPERIENCE OF SEEING THE CITY TO COME. BUT IT IS NOT THE CITY EZEKIEL SAW. IT'S A MUCH MORE GLORIOUS AND ETERNAL ONE. (FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN AN ANGEL GUIDED EZEKIEL TO MEASURE THE CITY IN EZEKIEL 40, HE USED A "MEASURING REED". THE ANGEL GUIDING JOHN HAS A "GOLD ROD TO MEASURE THE CITY".). THE ANGEL WILL MEASURE THE CITY AS JOHN RECORDS THE MEASUREMENTS JUST LIKE EZEKIEL CENTURIES BEFORE.

IN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION, ONE OF THE FINAL STAGES OF THE PROCESS INCLUDES SOMETHING KNOWN AS AN "AS-BUILT". THIS IS OFTEN DONE BY SURVEYORS WHO USES TOOLS TO MEASURE THE STRUCTURE TO CONFIRM THAT THE CORRECT SIZES, ELEVATIONS AND DIMENSIONS THAT WERE ON THE BLUEPRINT ARE NOW STANDING BEFORE YOU IN THE BUILDING. THE BUILDING INSPECTOR REQUIRES THIS AS PART OF THE FINAL INSPECTION WHICH WILL ALLOW FOR OCCUPANCY. IN A SIMILAR WAY, THE ANGEL IS MEASURING THE CITY AND NOTING THE CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS USED, AS GOD'S PEOPLE PREPARE TO OCCUPY THIS PLACE FOREVER. HERE ARE SOME OF THE DETAILS WE ARE GIVEN:

THE CITY'S SHAPE IS A SQUARE (BUT MORE ACCURATELY A CUBE) (V. 16)

1500 MILES (LITERALLY 12,000 STADIA) IN EVERY DIRECTION (LENGTH, WIDTH, HEIGHT) (V. 16)

WALL IS 72 YARDS THICK (144 CUBITS) (276 FEET) (V. 17)

CONVERTING THESE NUMBERS INTO OUR MODERN UNITS OF MEASUREMENT IS HELPFUL FOR US TO SEE THE MASSIVE SIZE THAT IS BEING DESCRIBED - BUT THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE IS ALSO COMMUNICATING SOMETHING OTHER THAN JUST ACTUAL MEASUREMENTS. HERE'S THE COMPARISON.

CITY IS A SQUARE - USING OUR MEASUREMENTS:

1500 MILES - EACH SIDE OF THE CITY (LENGTH, WIDTH, HEIGHT)

72 YARDS - THICKNESS OF THE WALLS

CITY IS A SQUARE - USING THE GREEK USED IN THESE VERSES

12,000 STADIA - EACH SIDE OF THE CITY (LENGTH, WIDTH, HEIGHT)

144 CUBITS - THICKNESS OF THE WALLS

THE GREEK IS NOT JUST RECORDING MEASUREMENTS, IT'S HIGHLIGHTING *PERFECTION* IN MULTIPLES OF 12.

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE CITY ARE 12,000 X 12,000 X 12,000 X 12,000

THE THICKNESS OF THE WALL IS 12 SQUARE CUBITS (12 X 12 = 144)

LIKE WE HAVE SEEN IN OTHER PLACES IN REVELATION, NUMBERS ARE USED TO COMMUNICATE DEEPER SPIRITUAL POINTS THAN SIMPLY RECORDING INFORMATION (CP. THE FREQUENT USE OF 75, THE 144,000 AND THE NUMBER 666).

REVELATION 21:18-21 - THE MATERIALS OF THE CITY

1. MATERIAL OF THE WALL IS JASPER (V. 18)

2. CITY IS PURE GOLD LIKE GLASS (V. 18) - BOTH OF THESE ALLOW FOR LIGHT TO SHINE THROUGH

3. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CITY ARE ADORNED WITH "EVERY KIND OF PRECIOUS STONE" (V. 19)

12 STONES ARE LISTED: JASPER (RED?), SAPPHIRE (OFTEN BLUE), CHALCEDONY (YELLOW OR BROWN?), EMERALD (GREEN), SARDONYX (DEEP ORANGE), SARDIUS (ORANGE-RED), CHRYSOLITE (GREEN), BERYL (GREEN), TOPAZ (GOLDEN?), CHRYSOPRASE (PALE GREEN), JACINTH (ORANGE OR RED?), AMETHYST (PURPLE). (IT MIGHT BLESS YOU TO DO SOME SEARCHING FOR PICTURES OF THE BEAUTIFUL COLORS TO APPRECIATE THE COLOR AND BEAUTY DESCRIBED HERE)

SIDE NOTE: THOUGH THE STONES LISTED HERE ARE DIFFERENT, THERE WERE TWELVE STONES AFFIXED TO THE BREAST PLATE OF THE HIGH PRIEST (SEE EXODUS 28:17-21)

4. THE GATES OF THE CITY ARE MADE OF A SINGLE PEARL! (V. 21)
5. STREETS OF THE CITY ARE PURE TRANSPARENT GOLD (V. 21)

REVELATION 21:22-27 - WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CITY

THIS CITY IS GLORIOUS IN EVERY WAY - BUT THE MOST GLORIOUS PART OF THIS GLORIOUS PLACE WILL BE THAT THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB ARE IN THE CITY. JOHN SAYS THAT THEIR PRESENCE PUTS THE SUN AND THE MOON OUT OF A JOB!

THE FINAL THINGS JOHN RECORDS ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND THE SAINTS OF OLD (ESPECIALLY FAMILIAR WITH JERUSALEM). HERE ARE THE RELEVANT PHRASES FROM VERSES 24-26

- 1 - THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH WILL WALK BY ITS LIGHT AND KINGS WILL BRING THEIR GLORY INTO IT
- 2 - NO MORE NIGHT,
- 3 - GATES NEVER CLOSED
- 4 - GLORY AND HONOR OF THE NATIONS BROUGHT INTO IT"

THESE VERSES AREN'T TEACHING THAT THERE WILL REMAIN EVIL NATIONS IN THE ETERNAL STATE, BUT THIS IS A FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECIES OF GOD BLESSING HIS PEOPLE ABOVE ALL THE NATIONS.

ISAIAH 60:1-5 (NLT) - "ARISE, JERUSALEM! LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE FOR ALL TO SEE. FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD RISES TO SHINE ON YOU. 2 DARKNESS AS BLACK AS NIGHT COVERS ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH, BUT THE GLORY OF THE LORD RISES AND APPEARS OVER YOU. 3 ALL NATIONS WILL COME TO YOUR LIGHT; MIGHTY KINGS WILL COME TO SEE YOUR RADIANCE. 4 "LOOK AND SEE, FOR EVERYONE IS COMING HOME! YOUR SONS ARE COMING FROM DISTANT LANDS; YOUR LITTLE DAUGHTERS WILL BE CARRIED HOME. 5 YOUR EYES WILL SHINE, AND YOUR HEART WILL THRILL WITH JOY, FOR MERCHANTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WILL COME TO YOU. THEY WILL BRING YOU THE WEALTH OF MANY LANDS.

ISAIAH 60:18-21 (NLT) - VIOLENCE WILL DISAPPEAR FROM YOUR LAND; THE DESOLATION AND DESTRUCTION OF WAR WILL END. SALVATION WILL SURROUND YOU LIKE CITY WALLS, AND PRAISE WILL BE ON THE LIPS OF ALL WHO ENTER THERE. 19 "NO LONGER WILL YOU NEED THE SUN TO SHINE BY DAY, NOR THE MOON TO GIVE ITS LIGHT BY NIGHT, FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL BE YOUR EVERLASTING LIGHT, AND YOUR GOD WILL BE YOUR GLORY. 20 YOUR SUN WILL NEVER SET; YOUR MOON WILL NOT GO DOWN. FOR THE LORD WILL BE YOUR EVERLASTING LIGHT. YOUR DAYS OF MOURNING WILL COME TO AN END. 21 ALL YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE RIGHTEOUS. THEY WILL POSSESS THEIR LAND FOREVER, FOR I WILL PLANT THEM THERE WITH MY OWN HANDS IN ORDER TO BRING MYSELF GLORY.

THIS (AND SO MANY OTHER PROMISES AND PROPHECIES) WILL BE ALL BE FULFILLED IN THAT DAY! THE COMPLETE REVERSAL OF FORTUNES! (ALSO SEE **PSALM 72**, **ISAIAH 49:23**, AND THE ENTIRE CHAPTER OF **ISAIAH 60**). REMEMBER, REVELATION IS A PROPHETIC BOOK AND PROPHECIES OFTEN USE IMAGES AND LANGUAGE TO HELP ILLUSTRATE GOD'S GENERAL POINT ON A TOPIC. WILL THE SUN AND MOON LITERALLY NO LONGER SHINE OR IS THE BIBLE COMPARING HOW INCREDIBLE GOD'S GLORY IS BY COMPARING IT TO THE LIGHT OF THE SUN?

SIMILARLY, THE FINAL VERSE OF THE CHAPTER TELLS US THAT "NOTHING UNCLEAN AND NO ONE WHO PRACTICES ABOMINATION OR LYING" SHALL BE ABLE TO COME IN TO THE CITY. THAT'S NOT BECAUSE THERE WILL BE A PLACE IN THE NEW CREATION WHERE SINNERS WILL LIVE BUT THEY JUST WON'T BE ALLOWED IN THE CITY - THE POINT IS, UNLIKE EVERY OTHER PLACE HUMANS HAVE EVER LIVED - CITIES IN PARTICULAR - WHERE THERE HAVE BEEN A MIX OF GOOD/BAD PEOPLE - WHERE THERE HAVE BEEN SUCH REAL THREATS TO THE SAFETY OF THE RESIDENTS, THAT WALLS AND GATES WERE NEEDED - IN THE NEW JERUSALEM, THIS WILL NOT EXIST.

NO TEMPLE?

FOR THOSE FAMILIAR WITH SCRIPTURE, THERE'S ANOTHER POINT BEING MADE ABOUT THIS CITY. AS WE READ AND CALCULATED ALREADY, THE CITY IS A PERFECT SQUARE. THERE IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT STRUCTURE WITH AN IDENTICAL (THOUGH MUCH SMALLER) SHAPE.

1 KINGS 6:1 (NLT) - IT WAS IN MIDSRING, IN THE MONTH OF ZIV, DURING THE FOURTH YEAR OF SOLOMON'S REIGN, THAT HE BEGAN TO CONSTRUCT THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. THIS WAS 480 YEARS AFTER THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WERE RESCUED FROM THEIR SLAVERY IN (EGYPT)

1 KINGS 6:19-20 (NLT) - HE PREPARED THE INNER SANCTUARY AT THE FAR END OF THE TEMPLE, WHERE THE ARK OF THE LORD'S COVENANT WOULD BE PLACED. 20 THIS INNER SANCTUARY WAS 30 FEET LONG, 30 FEET WIDE, AND 30 FEET HIGH. HE OVERLAID THE INSIDE WITH SOLID GOLD. HE ALSO OVERLAID THE ALTAR MADE OF CEDAR.

2 CHRONICLES 3:8 (NLT) - HE (SOLOMON) MADE THE MOST HOLY PLACE 30 FEET WIDE, CORRESPONDING TO THE WIDTH OF THE TEMPLE, AND 30 FEET DEEP. HE OVERLAID ITS INTERIOR WITH 23 TONS OF FINE GOLD.

THE ENTIRETY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM WILL BE THE MOST HOLY PLACE! THIS IS THE BEST PART OF ALL THAT WE HAVE READ - GOD IS DWELLING WITH HIS PEOPLE - NOTHING IS SEPARATING US IN ANY WAY. WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE! THE MOST HOLY PLACE OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE WAS NOT A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO GO, NO LESS LIVE. *ONE* PERSON (THE HIGH PRIEST) ON *ONE* DAY OF THE YEAR (YOM KIPPUR, THE DAY OF ATONEMENT), COULD *BRIEFLY* ENTER THE MOST HOLY PLACE - AND ONLY AFTER ELABORATE AND DETAILED SACRIFICING AND CLEANSING WAS DONE. AND THE FUTURE CITY OF GOD, THE FINAL DWELLING PLACE OF HIS CHILDREN IS *ITSELF* THE MOST HOLY PLACE!

THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CLEANSED BY THE SACRIFICE OF THE LAMB OF GOD, WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE ARE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THIS EARTH NOW - MOCKED AND DISREGARDED, PERSECUTED AND TRIED. WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE KING LIVING IN A STRANGE LAND - BUT IN LITTLE WHILE, WE WILL ARRIVE AT HOME. GOD'S GREAT CITY, LIT BY HIS MAJESTY WITH BEAMS OF GLORY BOUNCING & REFLECTING OFF OF EVERY WALL, EVERY STREET, EVERY GATE & EVERY STONE - WILL COME TO THIS EARTH & WE WILL LIVE IN THAT CITY, WITH OUR FATHER FOREVER.

AND SO WE JOIN WITH THE LONGING OF EVERY GENERATION AS WE CONFESS:

HEBREWS 11:16 (NLT) - (*WE ARE*) LOOKING FOR A BETTER PLACE, A HEAVENLY HOMELAND. THAT IS WHY GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED (*OUR*) GOD, FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR (*US*).

HEBREWS 13:14 (NLT) - FOR HERE WE DO NOT HAVE A LASTING CITY, BUT WE ARE SEEKING THE CITY WHICH IS TO COME.