

March 8, 2011

Jerusalem the Golden: The Transfiguration of the Church

Revelation 21:9 – 22:5

⁹And one of the seven angels who had the seven censers full of the seven last plagues came and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he carried me away in spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a crystalized jasper. ¹²She has a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— ¹³on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. ¹⁶The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. ¹⁸The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

²²And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

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- 9 "One of the seven angels..." from chapters 15 – 16. This verse parallels 17:1 with the Harlot!
"the Bride, the wife of the Lamb"- referring back to chapters 12 and 19, who is this?
- 10 "a great, high mountain"- symbolizing the unique vantage point John is granted for this vision
"holy city Jerusalem"- represents God's People (21:2) & heaven (22:2) but not earthly Jerusalem
- 11 "having the glory of God"- Ezek 43:1-5, also think of Transfiguration this past Sunday
"jasper"- a precious stone, also mentioned in 4:3 about the God's appearance
- 12 "on the gates the names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel"- symbolic of OT Church
- 14 "12 foundations... 12 apostles of the Lamb"- Apostles as foundation of NT Church (Eph 2:19-21)
- 15 "had a measuring rod of gold"- a detail included for the connection with Ezekiel 40:3
- 16 "foursquare"- a cube or perfect square was the perfect shape, like Solomon's Temple in 1 Ki 6:20
"12,000 stadia"- 1,380 miles, but we can see the number is 12×10^3 = the Complete Church
- 17 144 cubits – 12×12 , once more symbolizing the ultimate church of heaven
"by human...also an angel's measurement"- implying angels and humans are same size so to speak
- 18-21 Compare the Holy City here with the Holy Priesthood in Ex 28:17-20; 39:10-14 (Is 54:11-12)
- 21 "a single pearl"- pearls are not in the OT, in the NT (Mt 7:6, 13:45-46) it is the Church & the Gospel
- 22 "No temple...its temple is the Lord...and the Lamb"- What was special about the OT Temple?
- 23 "no need of sun or moon"- (Is 60:19) more undoing of Creation, heaven, earth, and sea are gone (21:1)
"glory of God"- the pillar of fire/cloud also called "Shekinah" over the earthly Temple
"its lamp is the Lamb"- Christ is the Light of the World, fulfilling the Temple's lampstands
- 24 "kings of the earth will bring their glory"- referring to Isaiah 60:1-6
- 25-26 With Evil vanquished, security measures like closing gates are unnecessary
- 27 "only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life"- those in heaven are the elect

The walls of the city with their OT Gates and the foundations of NT Apostles remind us that God is our Fortress, protecting His people through His Church, bringing them into His Holy City for all eternity. (Zech 2:5, Psalm 46)

John says there's no Temple in New Jerusalem, what happened to the Temple he measured? (11:1-2)

Brighton: The saints of God in their state of righteousness and holiness and perfection after the resurrection can now look directly into the face of God. No longer does he have to shield his people from the brilliance of his overpowering holiness and awesomeness...The city itself (that is, the people of God) is now the Holy of Holies in which God dwells. (page 618)

Compare this Holy City, New Jerusalem, with the Heavenly Temple seen in Ezekiel 40 – 48 (48:30-34)

¹And the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his slaves will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

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- 1 "river of the water of life"- There is no more Sea (chaos or turmoil) but there is a river. Why? Gen 2:9-17- Pishon, **Gihon**, Tigris, Euphrates (cf Ezek 47:1-12, Joel 3:18)
"water of life"- John loves to use water to speak of eternal life (John 3:5, 4:14, 7:37-38; Zch 14:8)
- 2 "tree of life"- first in Gen 2:9, then in Rev 2:7, in between these stands the Tree of Mt. Calvary
"12 kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month"- the fruit is for the whole Church, perpetually
"leaves... for healing of the nations"- undoes the shame of Genesis 3:7, here the leaves heal
- TLSB- "Because of what Christ accomplished on another tree – the cross of Calvary – God's people will again have free access to this tree; its fruit bestows immortality. For the present, the Holy Supper serves this function."*

Remember the words "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins"

The picture of the city is the Tree of Life in the middle, street on one side, River of Life on the other.

- 3 "no longer anything accursed"- the ancient curse of Adam & Eve is over, Original Righteousness restored!
"and his slaves will worship him"- final redemption leads to eternal worship, the Greek word means more than just praise/glorify/worship, the verb designates formal and official service (think Liturgist)
- 4 "they will see his face"- under the old curse, this results in death (Ex 33:20; Is 6:5)- 1 Cor 13:12
"his name ...on their foreheads"- Rev 3:12, 7:3-4, 14:1- Is it baptismal? Priesthood? Or both? (Ex 28:36-38)
- 5 "they will reign forever"- Church militant reigns for "1000 years," Church triumphant reigns forever!

