

Holy City New Jerusalem

If Rev chapter 21 is referring to Heaven, how would that have been an encouragement to these saints of the churches of Asia and their immediate predicament since nobody knew, not even Christ, when He would return for the church His bride (*Mat 24:36; Jn 14:2-3*). They needed to know, as we do, what would happen to them as an encouragement to remain faithful until death. This study refers to where they would go (*as part of the victorious church in Paradise*), immediately upon death, showing the time of their pain and suffering was to be considered as but for a vapor (*Jas 4:14; Lk 16:22*).

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

- new heaven and a new earth- (*contextually not the same as in 2 Pet 3*) It is spiritual Israel from Old (*the religious [Mosaic] system that governed Israel, the first heaven and the first earth*) that converted to spiritual Israel of the New (*the church governed by the final religious [Gospel] system, i.e., new heaven and new earth*).
- the sea was no more- no more restlessness (*See notes on 13:1*).

“The *new* heaven and earth, and the trouble sea, having passed away and represented as being *no more*, indicated the changed conditions within the existing governments and society to make them favorable for the prosperity of the cause of Christ and his church throughout the empire. The old system of Judaism had been removed and the opposition of heathenism had been overcome; and the vision represented new conditions to surround the church in the changed world.”

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Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

- With the end of the “first heaven and first earth” (*the Law of Moses having been nailed to the cross [Col 2:14]*), John recalls what he saw personally at Pentecost just 10 days after Christ’s ascension (*Act 1:13*). Jesus Himself said “there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power” (*Mk 9:1; Act 2:1-2*). This is the fulfillment of that statement. Only those who can enter this holy city are the faithful (*spiritual Israel*), the New Jerusalem.

Heb 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the **city** of the living God, the **heavenly** Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

- The "coming down out of Heaven" refers to the origin of the church. Only after Jesus ascended did the place He went to prepare (*the kingdom/church- Jn 14:2-3*) come on “the day of Pentecost” (*Act 2:1*). That place came down out of Heaven in the form of holy city, New Jerusalem. Jesus said He would go (*back to Heaven in order to “prepare a place”*; *Gk.5117- a spot [limited by occupancy] Rev 12:6*), would come back (*to earth to receive her after the figurative 1,000-year reign of the saints is completed*), receive the faithful (*the kingdom, His bride the church via the resurrection- 1 Thes 4:14-17*) and take her back to Heaven (*His place of origin*) with Him to deliver the kingdom to God the Father (*1 Cor 15:24*).

- **prepared**- Gk.2090- *to prepare*: -make ready. The church/bride of Christ is a prepared place for a prepared people (*Jn 14:3*). **Adorned**- verses 10-27 describe her adornment in such a way as to give man, with human vision, a description of how God sees the bride (*church/kingdom*) of His dear Son (*Col 1:13*).

Rom 7:4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the Law (“*first heaven and first earth*”) through the body of Christ, so that you may **belong to Another**, to Him Who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may **bear fruit** for God.

- The city, existing in both realms (*Paradise and earth*), is presently being prepared on earth for the Lamb (*Husband*) via the Gospel so that He can present His bride, the church, to Himself (*Eph 5:27*) after the judgment and then to His Father.

1Co 15:24 Then comes the end, when He **delivers** the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

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Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God.

- When His disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray (*Lk 11:1*), one thing He said to pray for at that time was for the kingdom (*a.k.a. the church*) and that it would come with its aim at fulfilling God’s purpose for mankind. Since it, in the form of the church, **did** come at Pentecost it ushered in God’s will being done “**on earth as it is in Heaven**” (*Mat 6:10*). Now righteousness dwells on earth via the church, Christ’s body (*Jn 2:21*), “the temple of God” since “God said, ‘I will make My dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people’” (*2 Cor 6:16; Jer 24:7; 31:33; Eze 11:20*).

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Rev 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

- This is the fulfillment that these persecuted saints needed to hear and was a message of comfort, speaking to “**the one who conquers**” in the eternal realm of the church (*Paradise -4:6; 15:2*) where they would no longer have to fear death (*Heb 2:15*).

- **Death**, i.e. martyrdom, along with **crying**, **mourning** and **pain**, all aspects of the persecution, will no longer be feared once the faithful saint has been ushered into the realm of Paradise by the angels of God (*Lk 16:22*).

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Rev 21:9 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

- She is first called the **Bride** (*Gk.3565-young married woman/ as veiled, betrothed, by impl. A son's wife. This is her present distinction.*) **in anticipation** (*Rom 7:4*) and wife (*Gk.1135*) **in realization** (*her future distinction*). See *Eph 5:29-32*.

- **the Lamb**- (*5:6*) the One Who paid the bride's (*church's*) dowry (*ransom*) for her that she might be His. He is a.k.a. “**Christ our Passover**” (*1 Cor 5:7*). See also *Ex 12:1-12*.

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Rev 21:10 And 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,

- in spirit- (1:10; 4:2; 17:3) not "the". Here, John had to be in the right mindset (Gk.4151) to perceive what it was the angel was about to show him; the Bride/church, but here as holy city Jerusalem (Gk.2419- *Of Hebrew origin [H3389]; founded peaceful*)
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- mountain- authority. The mountain (Dan 2:45) and the city are synonymous.

Isa 2:2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the **mountain of the house of the LORD** shall be **established** as the **highest of the mountains**, and shall be **lifted up above the hills**; and all the nations shall flow to it, (*This speaking of the church.*)

Dan 2:44 And in the days of those kings the **God of Heaven** will set up a **kingdom** that **shall never be destroyed**, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and **it shall stand forever**, (*Again speaking of the church.*)

Heb 12:22 But you **have come** to **Mount Zion** and to the **city of the living God**, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the **assembly of the firstborn** who are **enrolled in Heaven**, and to **God**, the **Judge** of all, and **to the spirits of the righteous made perfect** (*shows the dual nature of existence in the kingdom/ both in Paradise and on earth*), 24 and to **Jesus**, the **Mediator** of a **New Covenant** (Rev 14:1), and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of **Abel**.

“This beckoning of the angel is another proof, among the many others in the contexts of these chapters, that the descriptions of the holy city were not visions of heaven the home of the soul, but of the glorious church of Christ, designated the *bride* and the *wife* of the Lamb, redeemed from tribulation, but yet to fulfill her divine mission on the earth.”

Foy Wallace Revelation

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Rev 21:11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

- glory- the city has **God's** majesty and honor just as the tabernacle of Old radiated by the pillar of fire (Neh 9:12). The radiance of her glory from **God's** presence is like that of a precious stone.

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Rev 21:12 It had 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—

Rev 21:13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.

- Having a high wall gave reassurance to these saints that they would no longer have to fear their persecutors. Since **Jesus** came through Israel and salvation was offered “to the

Jew first" (*Rom 1:16*) what a fitting way to honor Israel by naming the twelve gates after the twelve tribes to whom "belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises" (*Rom 9:4*). See notes on 12:1.

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Rev 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

- twelve- complete/perfect. These foundations support the walls of the church. As "the twelve tribes" were honored so here the twelve apostles by naming the twelve foundations after them. Even though a foundation is built before the structure is erected upon it, the New Testament is what supports the Old in fulfilling the prophesies found in it concerning the coming of the Messiah (*Lk 24:44*).

Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** built on the **foundation of the apostles** and prophets, **Christ Jesus Himself** being the **cornerstone**,

Mat 16:13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" **14** And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." **15** He said to them, "But Who do you say that I am?" **16** Simon Peter replied, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" **17** And Jesus answered him, "**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father Who is in Heaven. 18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and on **this rock** I will build My church, and the gates of hell (*Gk.86-Hades*) shall not prevail against it. (*The foundation of the kingdom/church is Christ's deity.*)

1Co 3:11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

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Rev 21:18 The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass.

- Once again, the city radiates in the same manner as God Who sits on His throne in Heaven, like a precious stone- jasper (*4:3*), thus once again indicating His presence in it. Gold so pure as though polished glass (*v. 21*), like in Solomon's temple where "the floor of the house he overlaid with gold" (*1 King 6:30*).

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Rev 21:19 The 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,

Rev 21:20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

- These are what adorn the bride of verse 2. Twelve stones make up the foundation just as twelve stones made up the high priest's breast plate (*Exo 28:17-21*).

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Rev 21:21 And 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.

- The twelve gates of pearls so large an entrance is made through each of them.

- The (*singular*) street of gold polished beyond mirror finish. Gold here is like was “silver as common in Jerusalem as stone” that King Solomon had in such abundance (*1 Kings 10:27*). Thus, walking on it indicating our faith is “more precious... though it is tested by fire” (*1 Pet 1:7*; see also *Rev 15:2*). In the church we are “devoted to [God]” and thus “cannot serve God and money” (*Lk 16:13*). Our wealth comes from a different source (*Rev 3:18*), physical gold being so insignificant in comparison.

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Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

- Before Pentecost and the inception of New Jerusalem (*the church*) a physical temple existed that separated worshipers from God through the O.T. priesthood. The temple on earth now refers to the N.T. priesthood (*1:6*; *5:10*), a.k.a., the church (*1 Cor 3:16-17*; *2 Cor 6:16*; *Eph 2:21*; *1 Pet 2:5*). God here dwells with His people (*21:3*). He and Christ replace the O.T. temple with the body of Christ (*1 Cor 12:27*). In the Old Testament the focal point of worship **was** the temple (*1 Kings 8:41-43*; *Dan 6:10*). That focus here is changed since before this, man “[could not] see [God] and live” (*Ex 33:20*). Here, God and the Lamb are the center of the church’s attention.

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Rev 21:23 And 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.

- Light (*Gk.3088- illuminator*) has to do with illumination. With the physical luminaries being insufficient, the city is lighted by God (*Ex 34:29-35*; *Lk 2:9*) and Christ as her Lamp (*Ps 119:105*; *Jn 1:1-4*). Remember, God created the “lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night” (*Gen 1:14-18*) **after** He said, “let there be light” (*v. 3*). Why then would the church on earth need anything physical (*sun, moon, stars*) to enlighten it?

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Rev 21:24 By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it,

- The nations- Through “the twelve gates”, via “the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ” (*2 Cor 4:4*), named after “the twelve tribes” of Israel (“*the Jew first*”) came the preaching of the kingdom “also to the Greek” (*Rom 1:16*). They are those “from every nation” (*Jew and Gentile*) who are daily being received into the kingdom (*7:9*), and whose numbers expanded rapidly once Paul stated, “I will go to the Gentiles” (*Act 18:6*).
- kings of the earth- (*those of 1:6 and 5:10, i.e., saints who possess it as per Dan 7:27*) once qualified received their honor and dignity from God (*Rom 2:7, 10*; *Heb 2:7*) and are thus in this scene carrying such into the city with them.

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Rev 21:25 and its gates will never be shut by day--and there will be no night there.

- The gates of Jerusalem were closed because of the Sabbath, a day of rest that God held as a sign **between Him and the Israelites** (*Exo 31:12-17*).

Mar 2:27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

- The Sabbath was between **God** and Israel. **Jesus**, here, made a statement of equality with **God** (*Php 2:6*) by changing the Law (*Heb 7:12*) of the Sabbath as it would pertain to the New Covenant.

- As “**Minister**” (*Heb 8:2*) “in the true tent” (*the church*), the Old Testament one only the shadow of it, **Christ** exchanged the physical day of rest for the one that is to be eternal (*Heb 4:8-9; 8:1-6*). The significance of the gates never shutting; in **Nehemiah** the nations profaned the Sabbath thus the city was to be closed to them during its length. Here, in the New Jerusalem, they remain open since the nations are daily being received thus bringing their glory into it.

- no night- darkness (*ignorance*) obscures the light (*of the Lamb*). The day, here, is an eternal one in both realms since the saints on earth already possess it having “the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it” (*Eph 1:14*). As **Jesus** said in *Jn 5:24*, a Christian “**does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life**”.

Eph 5:13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible,

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Rev 21:26 They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

(*See notes on verse 24.*) Whatever glory and honor the nations had they received from **God** and would only be returning what is rightfully **His** (*4:9-11*).

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Rev 21:27 But 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.

- In order to be written in the **Lamb's** book of life a person has to be “qualified... to share in the inheritance of the saints of light” and be “transferred” **into** “the kingdom of [**God's**] beloved **Son**” (*Col 1:13*) and be “devoted... to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (*Act 2:42*). Just being baptized does not save unless a person is committed to the pre-denominational church/kingdom and her inspired teachings (*2 Pet 1:21*). So in order to be “qualified” a person needs to be found “in **Christ**” having “put [**Him**] on” by being “baptized into [**Him**]” (*Gal 3:26-27*). Being covered with the “**Lamb** without blemish or spot” (*1 Pet 1:19*) is accomplishing spiritually what **God** did with **Adam** and **Eve** in covering their shame in *Gen 3:21*. Anyone who has not been washed of their sin is unclean and cannot enter the kingdom/church described here. The great commission (*Mat 28:19-20*) explains the invitation. That invitation is offered in *22:17*.

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Rev 22:17 The **Spirit** and the **Bride** say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

- Bride- Not ‘wife’ here, showing context- the marriage supper hasn’t taken place yet.

- In whatever manner of visitation the **Lord** chooses (*tribulation, turmoil, affliction or final coming- 2 Cor 12:10*) along with the **Spirit**, the **Bride** (*church*) invites (*via the Great Commission- Mat 28:18-20*) those who will respond to the invitation to come. To have a thirst is to have a desire (*Jn 4:14*). (*21:6*) The water is free (*Pro 23:23*).

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