

45. The Description of the New Jerusalem – Part 1

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what God says about the new heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem. We also saw who will enjoy these new things. In this topic, and the next, we are going to see that we are given a description of the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:9-11 says, “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” The angel that the Lord chose, to tell John about the New Jerusalem, was one of the angels that had earlier brought one of the seven bowls of judgment. However, this time, the angel came to bring good news. Judgment of sin was necessary, but now that it has been judged, those who follow the Lord can rejoice in the future and not look back at the past.

Cities are known by the people who live in them. In our day, some cities are known for their corruption. Others are known for the major businesses that are in those cities. In the same way, the New Jerusalem will be known by the people who live in it. The angel told John to come, and said he would show John the bride, the Lamb’s wife. Revelation 19:7-8 says, “‘Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” These verses teach that the bride of Christ became the wife of Christ. In order to show John the New Jerusalem, the angel said that he would show John the Lamb’s wife. This means that this city will already reveal the character of the people who are in that city, even though Christ had not yet come at the time John learned this. The verses show that the clothing of the bride is the righteous acts of the saints.

Earlier topics showed that the unbelievers will be judged by their unrighteous heart attitudes, their thoughts, their words and their actions. In contrast, believers will have their righteous works rewarded. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 says, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” Some works of believers are only for this world. They will be revealed by fire. However, any works that have eternal value are good works that will be rewarded. In fact, these verses say that these works are the clothing of the saints. The clothing of the saints, in the New Jerusalem, will reveal their good works throughout eternity.

The angel carried John to a high mountain where he could see the holy Jerusalem. These verses point out that the New Jerusalem is called the holy Jerusalem. This is due to the fact that the New

Jerusalem has never been touched by sin or the effects of that sin. Instead, it descends from the heaven of God. The heaven of God is also known as the third heaven. In 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, we read, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” The first heaven talks about the sky and the atmosphere above us. The second heaven is the place of the sun, moon and stars. 1 Kings 8:30 makes it clear that the third heaven is where the throne of God is, as that verse says: “And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.” These verses teach that Paradise is now in the third heaven. That is where Christ is presently preparing a place for us.

Revelation 21:11 says that the holy Jerusalem has the glory of God. Then, Revelation 21:23 says, “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.” In the New Jerusalem, there will be no need for the sun, moon, and stars, because Christ, and the glory of God, will provide all of the light that is needed for eternity. That light is described as being like the light of a very precious stone. That stone is like or similar to a jasper stone. Jasper stones can be various colors like purple, blue, green, white or even the color of brass. Since this verse says it will be as clear as crystal it will be similar to a diamond and will reflect the glory of God to make the city even brighter.

Revelation 21:12-13 says, “Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.” These verses show that the wall will be very large and very high. There will be a total of twelve gates in the New Jerusalem with an angel in charge of each gate. Each of the twelve gates will have the name of one of the tribes of Israel written on it. In the wilderness, three tribes were on each side of the tabernacle. Here, the three of the gates will face each direction. It is possible that the names on the gates will be the same as the tribes that were on each side in the wilderness. Numbers 2 tells us that Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were on the east; Reuben, Simeon, and Gad were on the south; Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were on the south; and Dan, Asher, and Naphtali were on the north.

Revelation 21:14-18 goes on to tell us how the New Jerusalem will be set up when those verses say, “Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass.”

These verses teach that the twelve gates will have the twelve names of the tribes of Israel. In these verses, we see that the wall of the New Jerusalem will have twelve foundations or foundation

stones. The names of the twelve apostles will be written on these twelve foundation stones. These are called the twelve apostles of the Lamb. When choosing a replacement for Judas, we are given the specific ministry of the apostles in Acts 1:21-22, where we read: “Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.” The specific ministry of the twelve apostles was to be witnesses of the resurrection. Their names on the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem will be a reminder, throughout eternity, that it was the death and resurrection of Christ that makes it possible for all who are in the New Jerusalem to have that eternal life.

The angel who talked to John had a golden reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. In Revelation 11:1-3, those verses explained that an angel was given a measuring rod to measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. These things will be measured, because they are the possession of God. The court around the temple was not measured, because it was under the control of the Gentiles for forty-two months. The temple, altar, and people who worship there are measured to show that they are the possession of God. In the same way, this means that the measuring of the city, its gates, and its wall here is an indication that the city and everything in it, including all of the people in the city, belong to God. 1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” In the same way, all of the people who are measured in the New Jerusalem will also be a holy people and God’s own special people for all eternity.

These verses show that the New Jerusalem is laid out as a square. That means the width, length, and height will all be equal, which makes the city in the shape of a cube instead of flat like the cities today. This means that it will be an amazing city which is almost impossible to even imagine. A furlong is about six hundred feet. Twelve thousand furlongs is nearly one thousand four hundred miles. That means that the New Jerusalem will be nearly one thousand four hundred miles long, nearly one thousand four hundred miles wide and nearly one thousand four hundred miles high. The wall surrounding this city will be one hundred and forty-four cubits (two hundred and sixteen feet) thick. The angel said that this wall surrounding the city will be of jasper, which was described a few paragraphs ago. Then, the angel told John that the city itself will be made of pure gold that will be like clear glass. A person can only image what the New Jerusalem will look like, but it will certainly be much more beautiful than any person can ever image. We will see additional things that the Lord reveals additional things about the New Jerusalem in our next topic. We want to help our physical and spiritual children be able to explain that Christ is preparing a very special place for us that we will be able to enjoy for all eternity. It is greater than we can even imagine. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain how special that place will be.