

Revelation 21:9–21

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Date: 30 November 2008

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[0 : 00] Revelation chapter 21 verses 9 through 21. 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.

On the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies four square, its length the same as its width.

And he measured the city with his rod, twelve thousand stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.

The wall was built of jasper. While the city was pure gold, clear as glass, the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel.

[1 : 34] The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth burl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoress, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

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. This is the word of God.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. It was John Bunyan, who in his 17th century embattled Christian life, spent a little over 12 years in jail.

In the dampness of the Bedford jail in England. But he put his time to good use.

He wrote. And he wrote a book that sold more copies than any other book in the English language, at any rate, other than the Bible itself.

[3 : 01] Pilgrim's Progress. It's the journey, the long journey. I'm sure some of you think Revelation and our time in it has been a long journey.

But a lengthy journey that arrives at its conclusion in its final pages at the very gates of heaven. And he describes heaven with his two allegorical characters, Christian and hopeful, recently emerging from the River Jordan of death, speeding their way to this city whose foundation rises higher than the clouds.

And he writes that they were entering a place of inexpressible glory.

That when they arrived, they heard tumbling over the walls, the sounds of bells ringing, announcing their arrival.

That there were trumpeters clothed in bright and shining raiment. And then he has these words.

[4 : 40] Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them. And behold, the city shone like the sun.

The streets were paved with gold. And in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises with all. There were also of them that had wings.

And they answered one another without intermission, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord. And after that, they shut up the gates. And his editorial comment, That's Bunyan's longing for heaven.

And he peered in through the door. And when the gates were closed and he had to return to earth, Wake up to the circumstances in the morning, The Bedford jail, Making shoestrings that he might sell to support his wife and daughter.

He said, I wished myself among them. I do hope that as we peek into those city gates today, Our own souls would be stirred, Not merely emotionally, But affectionately, For heaven.

[6 : 36] For we are often too comfortable with earth. No doubt we have come in our text to heaven, To what the scriptures here call, Early on, The New Jerusalem.

I mean, the verses 9 through 15 Depict just such a place. The gates. On each side. Three among them.

The walls. The foundation stones. The apostolic foundation that supports it all. And according to the text, In verses 5 or 9 through 15, It having all the glory of God.

That's heaven. The first thing I want us to notice as we Engender within our souls through hearing and the reading of God's word today, A longing for this reality, Is that the place described here Is in reality a depiction of the people who dwell there.

I want you to see that early on. Take a look in verse 9. Then came out one of the seven angels, Who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, And spoke to me saying, Come, Come, I will show you the bride, The wife of the lamb.

[8 : 14] And he carried me away in his spirit to a great high mountain. Mountains, of course, in the scriptures, As well as in all of ancient literature, Being the place of God's abode.

In contrast, of course, To the sea or to the wilderness Where everything evil would come out from. And he showed me what?

The bride? The wife of the lamb? No. The holy city, Jerusalem. So the first thing we need to understand About this entire text Is that it is given to us In symbolic form, Speaking of the new Jerusalem And the city, A depiction of the city, Which is a description Of the people who live therein.

This isn't new to us As we have read Revelation, But if you haven't studied it, It is important to know, Right from the word go, How to handle symbols.

I just want to say that then As clearly as I can. The locale here, Jerusalem, Serves as both A description Of the place to which God's people are going, As well as a depiction Of the very people Who inhabit it.

[9 : 36] Now that notion Has a long And storied Exegetical base In the Bible. So this isn't just Doing whatever you want With the scriptures.

I recall all the way back In the Hebrew scriptures, Here's 2 Samuel 7, Where God Adopts this kind of Language, This dual understanding Between place And people.

Do you remember it? David desired to build God What? A house. God denies having any need For a house. And he declares That instead He will build David a house.

By which he does not mean Four walls And plumbing And electrical circuits.

He means A kingdom. A dynasty. So God himself In revealed scriptures Uses the language Of a house Or a place To actually depict The people.

[10 : 47] It's much In the same way That you might have Someone that you know Say, Yes, I come from the home Of immigrant parents. Well, It doesn't necessarily mean That they're speaking About the home In the kitchen floor And whether or not It was linoleum That they walked out of Before they met you.

No, They mean I come from the lineage Or I come From such a people. It's a similar thing That you'll find In Hebrews 12 22 Where the scriptures Say that We come to Mount Zion That is a place And by the time We arrive We realize We've arrived Where?

At the person Of Jesus Christ Who is said To be Mount Zion Or John 2 When Jesus says Destroy this temple And in three days I will raise it up again And they did not Understand That when he spoke Of the place He was referencing His person Or Jesus again On the Sermon on the Mount When he speaks Of His own followers Being not only The light of the world Which of course Was a symbol And image For Jerusalem And Israel But they were to be What?

A city Set upon the hill The language In scriptures That Describes A place But has a deeper Fundamental meaning In reference To the people Or Peter In his First letter Chapter 2 Where he says You yourselves Like living stones Are being built up As a spiritual house So when you arrive At the end of Revelation And you read Of this vision Where he ascends Into the city I want you to know That when he says I will show you The bride The wife Of the lamb And you are carried To a place You are to understand That all that follows While it presents itself As a description Of heaven References In its fullest way The people Who dwell there Let me put it

Differently This text Is all about You If you are in Christ This ought to be An encouraging text Especially for those Of you who are tired Of all the judgment Texts in Revelation Finally we found

One that might Hold your interest Beyond 515 This is what You will One day Be Thank God It's a great Contrast Isn't it To what The eternal Future will be For those Who do not Follow Jesus As the lamb The contrast In Revelation Couldn't be more Clear He wants you To see this Look at what You will be In distinction From the Unbelieving Future Or the Future for The unbelieving Community Come back Place your Eyes upon Verse 9 And look at The language Then came

[14:09] 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 Does that Bring any Memories Turn back To chapter 17 And verse 1 The identical Language By way Of contrast When he Began to Show the Future state Of those Who don't Follow the Lord Identical Language 17 1 Then one Of the Seven angels Who had The seven Bowls Came and Said to me Come I will Show you The judgment Of the Great Prostitute Who is Seated on Many Waters And the Harlot Became the City Of Babylon And their End Was Ever Lasting Torment Indeed The parallel Is so Clear That in Verse Chapter 17 Verse 18 He says And the Woman That you Saw Is the Great City That has Dominion Over the Kings Of the Earth What will You look Like Chapter 21 9 through The following Verses You will Look Very Different Than what We saw The prostitute In the City of Babylon You Will be Clothed With Inexpressible Glory Not only Is this Chapter then To be an Encouragement To you In that Respect You need To realize There are Two Destinies For Humanity And they Are as Different As the Content Of Chapter 17 And 18 And those That have Chapter 21 In mind Not only That but This is What has Encouraged Me most This week It is In contrast To our Present Reality Think of The bookends Now of Revelation We're beginning To close This book The present Reality Of the Bride Was listed Where In chapters 2 and 3 The seven Letters To the Seven Churches Referencing The state Of the Present Bride Of Christ And we Saw At the Very Beginning Of the Book And the Letter The Embattled Bride Often Bewildered Conflicted Compromised Under Temptation Duress Fear Most Of Most Of All Imperfect How often In my Own Mind Do those Early Words Of Revelation Roll Through Where he Speaks Of these Things But This I Have Against You O Bride But This I Have Against You The Contrast Here At the Close Of the Book Is so Great From that Of our Present Reality I Was Reading The Psalms This Week And I Came Across Psalm 62 Where David Describes The Present Reality Of the Anointed And God's People You Know What He Depicks Himself As You Know What Metaphor He Reaches To Say Let Me Show You What Life Is Like In The World As You Give Yourself To God He Reaches For These Phrases A Leaning Wall A Tottering Fence That's The Present Reality That's Your Life Experience And Mine And My Neighbors Too I Was Looking Out The Back Kitchen Window Across The Alley The Other Day He Had His Fence Redone Last Year His Wall You Know The Tuck Pointers Came Out And His Wall Had Been Well It's A Beautiful Wall But It Had Be Be To Bow Over Time Water Probably And The Mortar Began To Crack And It Began To Drive Wedges Through The Freezing And Over Time The Wall You Walked Down The Alley His Wall Bowed And Then A Couple Years Later It Began To Settle And One Corner Began To Have More Trouble And It Began To Crumble And Then It Looked Like It Was In A Complete State Of Disrepair And Finally He Called The Tuck Pointers And For A Tuck Pointer And Having Received The Quotes They Came And Repaired His Wall And I Saw Them Out There Again A Few Weeks Ago The First Winter Had Passed And He Evidently Wasn't Satisfied With Their Work And They Took All The Mortar Out I Love That About My Neighbor It Looked Right But He Knew It Wasn't Right He Had Him Take It All Out And Do It All Over Again Don't You Wish You Had

[19:10] Neighbors Like That Yes How Did We Get Here We're A Leaning Wall A Tottering Fence The Interior Makeup Of Our Soul The Present Reality Of Your Life And Mine Ought To Make Us Long For Heaven We're In Need Of Repair But In Verses 9 To 15 We Have These Great Strong Gates Twelve Of Them In Number These Great Strong Foundation Stones On Them Were The Names Of The Twelve!

Apostles I Think Of The Stones That Solomon Put In The Original Temple Says They Were Large And Costly Stones I Think Of My Own Soul My Need For The Gospel And How We're Reminded Every Week That We Are Weak That We Are Very Much Like The Church In Revelation 2 And 3 But We Finally Come To What We Shall Be One Day We Shall Be The Holy City Jerusalem Descending From Heaven Having

All The Glory Of God It's Just Amazing And Can It Be That We Should Be All The Glory Of God Well It's Only In Christ Because He's The Perfect Representation Of God's Nature And Character He Is The Exact Imprint And His Glory Has Been Manifested Among Us And Therefore In Christ

This In Some Sense Is Not Only Your Future This Is Your Present We Spend A Lot Of Time In Holy Trinity Rightly So I'm Sure In The Presentness Of Our Souls Makeup Revelation 2 And 3 But Today We've Arrived At 21 What We Shall

Be Having The Glory Of God Its Radiance Like A Most Rare Jewel Like A Jasper The Only Reason I Think Jasper Can Be Referenced Here Because It's Kind Of Not Really A Clear Like Stone From My Understanding Is This Is The Stone That Is Used Earlier In Revelation To Depict God Himself So We Are Becoming Like God We Have All The Fullness Of His Beauty His Perfection His Glory His Weight!

His Flowering Life All Of It All Of It On That Day Today I Was Walking To Church And I Came To The What I Call The Toaster The Toaster Buildings You Know 55th And Dorchester And Blackstone The Apartments They Look Like Toaster Slices As You Going Along!

[22 : 53] 55th Well The Trees On The East End Are In Full Bloom And The Flowers The Tulips Are Completely Up And Inside Was A Man Walking Round And Round Gloring In The Aromas Of His Habitation And I Thought How That Must Be If I Lived In That Building And I Looked Out Those Windows Down Upon Those Trees Knowing That One Day Would Be The Perfect Day To Walk Down There Today Is The Day And Revelation 21 Is Our Day What An Encouragement To Know That This Is In Contrast To Our Present Reality I'm Ready I'm Longing I Wish Even Though We Have Two Weeks To Go In Revelation

Even So Come Lord Jesus Look At What Else Characterizes The People Of God Not Only Is The Sense In These Opening Verses Through 14 That The Place Is The People But Look At What They Possess In A Sense They Have Become Right Among And In The Presence Of God And They Have The Protection Of God Look At Verse 15 And The One Who Spoke With Me Had A Measuring Rod Of Gold To Measure The City And Its Gates And Walls The City Lies Four Square And Its Length The Same As Its Width And He Measured The City With His Rod 12,000 Stadia Its Length And Width And He Are Equal He Also Measured The Wall 144 Cubits By Human Measurement Which Is Also An Angel's Measurement Now If You Take That In A Literalistic Way Rather Than A Symbolic Way You Ended Up With A City That Stretches Between 13 And 1500 Miles I

Mean Somewhere Akin To Here And The Rocky Mountains Squared And Then Cubed You Got To Go Up Into The Sky 1300 1500 Miles What A Measurement What's It Referring To There's Only To My Understanding One Way To Look At This In The Hebrew Scriptures There Was Something That Was Built In A Perfect Cube 1 King 6 20 Says The Inner Sanctuary Was 20 Cubits Long 20 Cubits Wide And 20 Cubits High And Overlaid With Pure Gold The Only Old Testament Corresponding Place That Is Perfectly Cubed Is The Holy Of Holies

Even Ezekiel Vision Which John Is Obviously Embedded In Ezekiel 40 To 48 On The New Jerusalem Only Speaks Of Its Length And Its Width So The New City Is Here Actually Put Forward And Its Height Is The Same So What You Have By Way Of Understanding Is That God's Presence Dwells Among Us And We Dwell With God That's Heaven That You Actually Have Access To The Holy Of Holies That God Has Come Down And Dwelt Among Us That The Mediating Work Of Jesus On The Cross Has Been So Completely Perfect That You And I Stand Openly In The Presence Of Mediation

Forever! That Is Where You're Going To The Presence Of God And You Will Have His Protection Most Of The Commentaries Speak Of This Measuring Rod As That Which Would Secure What It Is He's Writing About That Which Would Make It Firm Distinct Here It Is That You Will Abide Under God's Protection For Ever More That Will Be Full That Will Be Complete I Think Of Revelation 7 Where It Talked About Being Sealed That God's Full People The Tribes Of The Sons Of Israel The Same Language Construction That We Have There Is In Verse 12 Of Our Text That Those Who Are Sealed

[27 : 56] Are Those Who Have Been Measured And Full And Are Accounted For God's Full Family Who Have His Ever Lasting Protection To Be God's People To Be Forever In His Presence To Know His Protection And Look At 19 To 21 To Be Absolutely At Peace There Is Astounding The Wall Was Built Of Jasper While The City Was Pure Gold Clear As Glass The Foundations Of The Wall Of The City Were Adorned With Every Kind Of Jewel And Then There's The Listing Of Twelve Stones In The Days Of Moses There Was Directions Given For The Breast Plate Of

The High Priest And Upon The Breast Plate Of The High Priest Exodus 28 There Were Affixed Precious Stones Nearly Identical To The List Here Not In Order But In Stones And In Gems And On

Those Stones Was To Be Engraved The Names Of The Tribes So That When The High Priest Went Into The Presence Of God He Bore On His Breast God's People And Here We Find That The People Themselves In A Sense Are Mortared Into The Presence Of God Forever
More Jesus Has Born Your Name In His Death And Will Bear Your Name In His Presence Forever
Let Me Put It In The Language Of What Was Read Earlier Today This Ought To Call Up Within Us
Set Me As A Seal Upon Your Heart As A Seal On Your Arm Let Me Put It In The Language Of The Wall Mortar Me In Because I Am Tottering Here Failing Faltering Weak Weak Unable Imperfect Forever Compromised
Never Righteous Always Short No matter How Disciplined Mortar Me In It Doesn't Get Any Better Than This It Doesn't Get Any Better That You And I Get In That We Should Get In It Is Astounding But There They Are The Walls Itself Built!
With Those Precious Stones Well I Wish I Were Among Them Let's Pray Our Heavenly Father Cultivate Our Souls With A Hunger For Heaven And Create Within Us Oh Lord A Longing For The Fullness Of This Future Picture Wean Us From This World Encourage Hearts Who Have Come Weighed Down Today And May They Glory In What They Shall One Day Be In Jesus Name Amen
Let's
[32 : 39] Stand Back