THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER 21

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

v. 1 Interestingly John uses the phrase, “and I saw” twenty-four times in the Revelation. This is the twenty-third use. The “and I saw” phrase, explains to John’s readers the various “mini visions” within each large vision. After death and hell have been removed John sees a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. It is necessary to note that it was not a cosmic explosion by nuclear war that brought the new heaven and new earth. Obviously the issues that brought about the new was the removal of death and hell and the removal of those not in the book of life (20:14, 15).

This word translated new is kainos (Greek). The word “new” is found 61 times in the King James version translation of the New Testament. Of these 61 “new’s” six different Greek words are used. The word that we mean when we say “new” is the Greek word neos which is defined as “new or youthful.” It is used to describe new wine (Mat 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37, 38); younger (15:12, 13; 22:26; John 21:18; Act 5:6; 1Ti 5:1, 2, 11, 14; Tit 2:4, 6; 1Pe 5:5), new lump of dough (1Co 5:7); putting on the new man (Col 3:10); and New Covenant (Heb 12:24).

The word used here for new heaven doesn’t mean newly created as we would think. It does mean new as in “never experienced” or “never used.” This would be the context. We allow the chapter breaks to break our contextual attachment. This verse (21:1) follows its previous verse (20:15) and is in the context with 20:11-15. That context is the removal of the devil, the removal of death, the removal of hell, and the removal of those not in the books. All of that is removed from the earth and cast into the lake of fire and leaves the earth in a new state never experienced before.

The earth which John saw is the new earth and the new heavens Peter spoke about. That was an earth “where dwelleth righteousness.”

2Pe 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It is that simple. The earth will not be blown up. It will be cleansed of Satan, wicked people, hell, and death. That will be a new earth.

St. John has shown us how righteousness would dwell in the earth. This would fulfill the words Peter wrote in 2Pe 3:1-13. That too would be by the removal of all evil. In Peter’s context (2Pe 3:1-13), Peter is addressing those “scoffers” doubting the words of the Lord. The Lord’s apostles taught (2Pe 3:2) concerning the end. Below are the Scriptures, in context, concerning the end of heaven and earth in 2nd Peter.

2Pe 3:5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

2Pe 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

2Pe 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

2Pe 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

2Pe 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Peter compares the end of which Peter speaks, to the end of the world at the time of Noah (2Pe 3:5-7). It is easily seen that in Peter’s thinking he did not mean that the literal heavens and literal earth will be removed. The literal heavens and earth were not literally removed in the day of Noah (2Pe 3:6). In Noah’s day the earth was simply cleansed from evil and unrighteous, just as John tells us in the end of Revelation 20. Peter speaks of “the day of the Lord” (2Pe 3:10) which, as discussed, was not speaking of Sunday (see discussion 1:10; 6:12-14; 11:3; 18:8, 23). It is not a day for natural Israel to be blessed. Rather a day for natural Israel to end. It is the end of the age (world) for Judaism as was
The Stone Cometh

then known. It is “Collapsing Universe” terminology. It is prophetic language concerning the termination of a nation. When the phrase “the day of the Lord” is read, it means the termination of a nation. Thus here Peter is speaking of the termination of a nation and that nation would be Judah (Israel). Peter used “Collapsing Universe” terminology. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2Pe 3:10). As well observed, that system “heaven and earth” was “reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2Pe 3:7).

Thus Peter’s discussion of fire and fervent heat is concerning the day of the Lord. That was the end of temple worship and the law of Moses. After discussing this Peter says, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2Pe 3:13). Paraphrased “Nevertheless, what we truly look for is the new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells.”

It is of this heaven and earth John speaks in Revelation 21. It is not one that has been destroyed by a nuclear war. It is one that is cleansed of the devil, death, hell, and of those not found in the books. John says, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. John does not say they were destroyed, they passed away. The word parerchomai (Greek) translated passed means “time concluded.” Parerchomai (passed) is a word associated with time. The disciples said to Jesus concerning the multitude which Jesus would feed “This is a desert place, and the time is now past (parerchomai); send the multitude away (Mat 14:15). The Lord said, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass (parerchomai), till all these things be fulfilled” (Mat 24:34). John is relaying that the time passed for that heaven and earth. It is now time for the new!

John says, and there was no more sea. As discussed, the mention of the sea is to bring our minds to the turbulent waters which Babylon sat upon (17:1, 15). Sea and water teach of “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” in the scriptures. This new heaven and earth has no sea.

People are one. The word sea should also take our thinking to the abyss (see discussion 9:1-10; 18:21). The sea is the dwelling of leviathan, the crooked serpent and dragon. John is not seeing a world without water, but rather a world without the serpent or evil or an abyss (hell):

**Isa 27:1** In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

Another truth about sea is that it divides people. North and South America is divided from Europe by a sea. In Christ’s kingdom there will be no more division, because there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian.

What John is showing us is the time will come when evil will no longer exist. It is a new heaven and earth. There is no turmoil (sea), no death, and no hell. All evil and wickedness has been thrown into the lake of fire forever. Today’s popular teaching is that this world will be destroyed. A newly created world manufactured by God will be inhabited by His people. Why would He go to all the trouble of cleansing this earth from all evil, death, the dragon, and those not in the book and then destroy it? Why not just destroy it and not worry about cleansing it?

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

v. 2 It is most important to know exactly what John saw when he said, the holy city, new Jerusalem prepared as a bride. Did he see a newly constructed Jerusalem? What did he see? A few verses into this chapter we learn what John saw, and meant:

**Rev 21:9** And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

**Rev 21:10** And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

The bride is the church, the new Jerusalem, which has replaced the old Jerusalem. The church is now the centrality of worship, replacing the old temple worship with the new. The apostle Paul said, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1Co 3:16). The correct understanding of the heavenly
Jerusalem is given by the apostle Paul in an allegory found in the book of Galatians. “Jerusalem which now is” (Gal 4:25) is the natural city and temple worship that existed prior to A.D. 70 and is Hagar (Agar) the bondwoman and mother of Ishmael. She will be “cast out” her and her son. The “Jerusalem which is above” (Gal 4:26) “is the mother of us all.” She is the true bride, and wife, and brings forth the promise.

Gal 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

Gal 4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

Gal 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which engendereth to bondage, which is Hagar.

Gal 4:25 For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

Gal 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Gal 4:27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

Gal 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Gal 4:29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Gal 4:30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Gal 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

The apostle Paul understood and taught that the law was added, as Hagar was added to Abraham’s purposes. Hagar did not work out and had to be removed at Sarah’s command. Her command was, “Cast out the bondwoman and her son” (Gal 4:30; Gen 21:10). The church will continue to put up with the false doctrine of the Dispensationalists until it says, “Cast out the bondwoman and her son!” They continue to mock the promise—the church. The church was always the purpose of God. That was Paul’s message to Galatia.

The writer of Hebrews also shows the New Testament teachings concerning the New Jerusalem. It is the place believers come as they are brought (“translated” Col 1:13) into the kingdom of Christ. The writer of Hebrews gives us the way

The New Testament believers spoke of the church. It is Zion (Sion). It is the city of the living God called the heavenly Jerusalem. It is where the innumerable company of angels exist in our presence (see discussions on angels). It is the assembly and church of the firstborn who is Jesus. This assembly is written in heaven (see discussion 20:13-15). The believer has come to Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood:

Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (emphasis added)

The believer has no problem grasping the coming to Jesus, to the blood, to the church, or even having the names written in heaven. It is understanding that we have come to “the heavenly Jerusalem” spoken of in Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22, and Revelation 21-22 that gives them problems. The main problem is seeing that this heavenly city is both for now, and for the future. We have come to the New Jerusalem and she is the mother of us all. Yet, the location of John’s discussion of her seems to place her only in existence after the devil is cast into the lake of fire, after the book of life is read, and after death and hell are removed from the earth. How can this be the same New Jerusalem?

Paul’s allegory in Galatians 4:21-31 (already discussed) should help. It shows that Sarah was the original wife of Abraham. Hagar was added to the plan of Abraham exactly as the law was added to the plan of God (Gal 3:19). Also, Sarah brought forth Isaac late in her life. This was also late in Abraham’s purpose. None the less, the purpose was always Isaac (church), not Ishmael (law). The church has always been the purpose of God. Exactly as Sarah, the church will bring forth the promise late in the plan and purpose of God. In the same way Satan tried to defile beautiful Sarah with Pharaoh and Abimelech, he has attempted to defile the church by the Pharaohs and Abimelechs of his system. Still exactly as with Sarah, the Lord has kept the church and she will birth the promise! This
is exactly what the apostle Paul projects as he discusses the great mystery of the Church:

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish . . .

Eph 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

She is being prepared. The process is by the sanctification. The cleansing progresses with the washing of water by the word. She comes to the place of “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” She will come to the ultimate place of her description given in 21:9-22:6. John says this: she was prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. She had been prepared. The Greek word here is hetoimazo meaning “prepared.” When traced into its root word hetoimós we find this word means adjusted. His bride has been adjusted! She is seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph 2:6) to assist in ruling and reigning. She comes down out of her heavenly position to bring righteousness to the earth (Rev 3:12). She is the mother of us all (Gal 4:21-31) bringing us into the household of God (Eph 2:19; Phil 3:20). And as Hebrews 12:22-24 has told us, we have already come to this city. Her purpose is not to remain afar off. Rather, her purpose is in coming down from God out of heaven.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

v. 3 It has always been the purpose of God to dwell with men:

Exo 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

Lev 26:11 And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.
Lev 26:12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

This is exactly what Jesus Christ displayed to the world as He “dwelt among us.” John 1:14 says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” The word skenno translated “dwelt” in John 1:14 means “tabernacle.” Jesus was the fulfillment of Moses’ Tabernacle in the wilderness. Jesus Christ came showing the realness and love of God for His people. The glorious church is what God has always wanted. He will dwell with them and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.

Matthew Henry comments as he writes prior to the Dispensationalists,

“The new heaven and the new earth will not be separate from each other; the earth of the saints, their glorified, bodies, will be heavenly. The old world, with all its troubles and tumults, will have passed away. There will be no sea; this aptly represents freedom from conflicting passions, temptations, troubles, changes, and alarms; from whatever can divide or interrupt the communion of saints. This new Jerusalem is the church of God in its new and perfect state, the church triumphant. Its blessedness came wholly from God, and depends on him. The presence of God with his people in heaven, will not be interrupted as it is on earth, he will dwell with them continually.”

Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

v. 4 The great hope the true church can offer is that she can promise a joy now, and a total joy as she becomes more and more ready to be presented to her Lord and Husband. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Their eyes shall be full of joy as sorrow and crying flees away. We have been given the earnest of our inheritance now (Eph 1:14), which is the guarantee of the fullness to come. The church can offer life after death now for those who will come and have their names enrolled in the book of life. However, the church can also boast of a day when there shall be no more death at all, neither shall there be any more pain.

It must be remembered to whom John is writing. He writes to the seven churches in Asia (1:4, 1:11). These people were going through, and would witness, tremendous persecution and torments that we can only read about. They had literally watched their loved ones fed to wild beasts. Imagine, if possible, the tears from their eyes. John promises that God shall wipe away those tears. Imagine, if
possible, the sorrow and crying of parents who are forced to watch their children martyred in all forms of demonic butchery. Children would watch as their parents were beheaded and their heads rolled away from their bodies as the blood would pump and the bodies would quiver in death. John says, there shall be no more death. To us this is a wonderful fairy tale that we look forward to experiencing one day. To those it was actually written to, these were words to grasp and hold with clinched hands. It would be these words that would allow them to maintain their sanity and help them make it through the next day, or even next hour. The church today is taught that this as an end to a good story where the good guys win. To those whom John literally wrote this letter, these words gave life, hope, and meaning to death, pain, and tremendous sorrow. They could maintain sanity as long as they knew this “present affliction” would pass. John promised that the former things are passed away.

Rev 21:5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

v. 5 It is important to know that at the end of history God does not “make all new things.” He does make all things new. This is exactly what was discussed in verse one. The old has “passed away” (21:1), as its time concluded. The new is cleansed by the removal of the devil, death, hell, and those not written in the books. Now, He that sat upon the throne says, Behold, I make all things new.

This may best be seen in personal redemption of a life. The person, though the same person, becomes a new creation or creature (King James). “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The word translated new in Revelation 21:5, is also used in 2 Corinthians 5:17, and is the same Greek word translated new in Revelation 21:1 for “new heavens” and “new earth.” A person experiencing the reality of becoming a “new creature” has the same body and soul. However, it is redeemed as “old things are passed away” and all things are made new. John is here speaking of a redeemed society where there is no devil, death, hell, or any person not written in the books.

An individual experiencing redemption can, and does, experience the making of all things new today. This is a promise for the church today and a picture of a society, and all of creation, at the end of history when not only this is experienced individually, but the entire earth is made new! God’s redemption is inclusive of all creation:

Rom 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

The first century preached the redemption and renewing of creation, not the destruction of it! Today a different gospel is preached. Today a different message is heard. The Bible teaches that creation itself waits in expectation for the sons of God to be revealed, who will then be used to redeem creation by liberating it from the bondage to decay:

Rom 8:19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope

Rom 8:21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Rom 8:22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Rom 8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (NIV)

Why would the Lord God redeem all of creation, and then destroy it? Does that make sense to anyone? That is not His plan or purpose. His purpose is to redeem creation exactly as He redeemed mankind. He will, and is, making all things new. He is not making all new things.

John was instructed to write it down because it will happen. The one on the throne said, these words are true and faithful. He cannot lie (Num 23:19), and His word is magnified above His name (Psa 138:2). This will happen in its totality.

Rev 21:6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

v. 6 This is the third time that the Son of man identifies Himself as Alpha and Omega. It is an
obvious allusion link to the fact that He is the beginning and the end (1:8). Our language today would say “A to Z” and contextually that would be correct.

The Alpha and Omega said, **It is done.** This, of course, is reminiscent of the word the Alpha and Omega said from the cross. He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Revelation 16:17 reports the same words as the vial is poured out upon Babylon. “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.” As surely as the work upon the cross finished the practice of temple worship with the sacrificing of animals; and gave a new and better covenant, the new heaven and new earth will happen. The redemption of all creation with no more death, pain, or sorrow is a promise. As surely as the destruction of the harlot took place in A.D. 70, with the pouring out of the vial, is the sureness that can be anticipated for the making of “all things new.” Write it down, because the Alpha and Omega said it.

There will be one more reference to this identification of Alpha and Omega. It is purposed to allow us to know that He knows not only the beginning, but also the end. In fact, He not only wrote the book, He is the book and every letter of the book!

**Rev 1:8** I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

**Rev 1:11** Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

**Rev 21:6** And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

**Rev 22:13** I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

His requirement is to thirst. He said, I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. The Alpha and Omega used the allusion of thirst often in His teachings.

**Mat 5:6** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

**Joh 4:14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

**Joh 6:35** And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

**Joh 7:37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

**Joh 7:38** He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

There is a requirement of the Lord. He uses the analogy of thirst to convey the message. When a person truly does thirst, the drive to drink is powerful. Jesus speaks of thirsting after righteousness. Righteousness doesn’t simply happen. One must thirst for it. Simply thinking about Jesus and thinking about heavenly things will not quench the thirst. Jesus said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (John 7:37). First, there must be a thirsting for Him. In Revelation 21:6 there must be a thirst for life. The thirst is only quenched by coming to the Alpha and Omega. Jesus promised life, and that abundantly (John 10:10). For the one that is athirst there is a promise of the fountain of the water of life.

Today’s society is deceived as to what life truly is. As we will see in the next verse, life is actually overcoming and victory. Salvation and redemption is for life, not death. Jesus came to give life abundantly. He did not come to give death abundantly. The water is ready and available for life.

**Rev 21:7** He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

**Rev 21:8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

v.v. 7, 8 Chilton says:

“...The theme of the Seven Letters is repeated in the promise to the overcomer, the victorious Christian conqueror: He who overcomes shall inherit these things. This prophecy has never lost sight of its character as a practical, ethical message to the churches (rather than a bare “prediction” of coming events). We must also note that the inheritance of all these blessings is exclusively the right of the overcomer. As we have already seen
St. John does not allow for the existence of a defeatist Christianity. There is only one kind of Christian: the conqueror. The child of God is characterized by victory against all opposition, against the world itself (1 John 5:4).  

1Jo 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 

1Jo 5:5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? 

These two verses are very clear. Today’s theology waters them down and actually disagrees with them. The fact is, **He that overcometh shall inherit all things.** He that does not overcome, but is fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars inherits the **second death,** which is the **lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.** This does away with “sloppy agape.” John wrote in 1 John 5:4 that when a person is truly born of God, that person overcomes the world. True faith overpowers the world. 

Is there any other way to translate these verses? What about God’s forgiveness? Forgiveness is forgiveness as long as it is leading to overcoming. Too often forgiveness is requested with no intention of repentance or overcoming. 

Wycliffe Commentary writes:  

“We now come upon something that we really would not expect to find in this description of the Holy City, namely, an indication of the classes of sinners who will not be there but rather will be found in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. These are dreadful words. If we embrace with enthusiasm and thanksgiving the promises of this book, we must also believe its solemn warnings. Lang calls attention to the phrase, ‘their part,’ commenting that ‘the heart could wish that the vision closed on the radiant heights but instead it sinks to the lowest depths.’”

Again it must be remembered to whom John is writing this letter. Those persecuted needed to know that they would be rewarded and would inherit all things as the sons of God. All others, those responsible for the killing, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, etc., will only inherit the **lake which is the second death.** 

**Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.**

v. 9 Verses 9 and 10 have the potential to forever change a person’s theology. Traditional theology teaches that the following verses speak of “heaven,” as in the place a person goes when they die (stop breathing). As will be seen, that is not the emphasis of the passage. The emphasis is to see the **wife of the Lamb** in all her glory. As we clearly know from the Scriptures the wife of the Lamb is the church (Eph 5:25-27; Joh 3:29; Mat 9:15; Mar 2:19; Mat 26:28; Rom 7:4; 1Co 6:17; 2Co 11:2). 

The angel desires to show John the **bride, the Lamb’s wife.** Again we see, as we have seen over and over, an angel in the revelation is more than a celestial being. The angel is best seen as a messenger of God (see discussion 1:1, 20). Every angel, no matter if celestial or a pastoral messenger, desires to show off and describe the **bride, the Lamb’s wife.** I sure do. More than any thing I can teach or explain, I most enjoy talking about the church. 

**Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,** 

v. 10 It is extremely necessary to see exactly what the angel took John to see. The angel took John to see the “bride, the Lamb’s wife,” then showed John **that great city, the holy Jerusalem!** The Lamb’s wife, the bride of the Lamb, is a **city.** That city is **holy.** That city is **holy Jerusalem.** That city is hagios (Greek) meaning “sacred; blameless; consecrated.” The city is seen **descending out of heaven from God.** The city is of God and from God. The old Jerusalem is replaced with the **holy Jerusalem, which is the bride, the Lamb’s wife, which is the church!** 

This is the beginning of the fourth, and final, great vision that John experienced in the Revelation (see discussion Rev 1:10; 4:2; 17:3). These four great visions divide the Revelation. As we have seen, the numerous sub-visions help explain the great vision. This great vision and Revelation of Jesus Christ is concerning the **bride, the Lamb’s wife.** 

As previously discussed a **mountain** is a place of worship (see discussion 8:8, 9), such as Sinai, Moriah, Ephraim, Gerizim, Ebal, Bethel, etc. A **mountain** in the scriptures speaks of a place of true worship or false worship (Jer 3:6; Hos 4:12,
13: John 4:20, 21). Here John is in the spirit and carried to a place of worship where he is shown holy Jerusalem.

John reports that he saw this holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God.

“The picture is not, of course, intended to evoke images of space stations, or of cities literally floating in the air, rather, it indicates the divine origin of ‘the City which has foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God’ (Heb 11:10).”

The scripture says the bride was descending out of heaven. Perhaps a far better image for us to see would be a queen descending a stairway. Rather than attempting to see huge space ship, see the Lamb’s wife gloriously moving down a beautiful stairway. She is the Lamb’s wife.

Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

v. 11 John relates the appearance of the Lamb’s wife to the appearance of the throne room described in 4:3, 6.

Rev 4:3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone . . .

Rev 4:6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal . . .

Could it be that John is describing the church, the Lamb’s wife, as the location of the throne room? This is exactly what John is describing. It becomes crystal clear in verses 22, 23; 22:1, 3.

Rev 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

In 1 Corinthians 11:7 Paul says, “. . . the woman is the glory of the man.” Thus the church is the glory of Christ. As she descends the stairway of the heavens in all her glory, she projects the glory of God. She is as a stone most precious. John makes the allusion link to her glory as he compares her glory to the temple Solomon built. The temple Solomon built was full of gold, silver, and precious stones. King David actually designed and acquired most of the materials for the construction of the temple. David left these materials for Solomon to construct the temple glorious:

1Ch 29:2 Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones,

and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.

The temple which David designed and Solomon built was plastered without with silver, and plastered within with gold. Polished brass was used at the altar, the great laver, and the gates and pillars. It was gloriously prepared. Then, when prepared, the Lord filled it with His presence:

1Ch 29:4 Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal:

2Ch 3:7 He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls.

2Ch 5:14 So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

Rev 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

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

v. v. 12, 13 John gives a detailed description of the city, the Lamb’s wife. This is not a description of “heaven,” the place where dead saints walk. This is the church mighty and glorious! This is the New Jerusalem. The intent of the description is to show that the old Jerusalem has been replaced. The old Jerusalem was the harlot wife. The church is a glorious wife.

John describes the twelve gates situated in the four square (perfect) walled city. This great and high wall had three gates on each side. Found on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. The influence of the wife and church of the Lamb would influence all nations from all four corners of the globe. The glory of God was no longer for one nation. The Tabernacle in the wilderness had one entrance. The Temple Solomon built had one entrance. This depicted the one door, which is Jesus Christ. Now, the earth is full of the knowledge. The devil is in the lake of fire along with those who served him. Righteousness fills the earth and the doors are open. Whosoever will come and drink freely!

At the gates twelve angels are stationed. Are they to guard or to welcome? Angels, as we have
noted, are the prophetic messengers and leaders of the Church. They welcome, teach, and pastor all that enter the gates of God. Angels are not stationed to keep out, but to welcome in all who come. In the temple Solomon built, the angels (cherubim) were engraved into the walls and embroidered in the veil. In the city, the angels are authentic.

2Ch 3:7 He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls.

Solomon’s temple had many gates with assigned porters (gatekeepers) for each gate. The gatekeepers were assigned “according to the house of their fathers” (1Ch 26:13). However, these were only from the house of the father of the Levities, and specifically the Korhites:

1Ch 26:1 Concerning the divisions of the porters: Of the Korhites was Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph.

1Ch 26:13 And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate.

In this New Jerusalem there is no one tribe that greets and ministers to those entering. All tribes are involved, for the people are a kingdom of priests as it was originally meant to be:

Exo 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

The gates also have written upon them the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. It can never be forgotten that the gospel was first preached to the Jews. Jesus first preached to the house of Israel (Mat 10:6; 15:24). Peter preached to the house of Israel on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2:36. In old Jerusalem, only the Levities were priests. In the New Jerusalem, all are a kingdom of priests unto our God, who not only minister at the altars, but reign with Christ (Rev 5:10). It cannot be forgotten that all twelve disciples were Jews representing the Jews. The apostle Paul was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin (Phi 3:5). These, because of their faithfulness and teachings, have gone into all the earth opening the doors of the New Jerusalem to all people. These opened the way as they preached to every creature:

Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

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

v. 14 The NASV version records this verse as “And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” These foundations would not be stacked upon one another as usually portrayed. Rather the stones are laid side by side. This was the construction format of the temple. The temple Solomon built was upon great stones ten cubits square (15 feet square).

1Ki 5:17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

1Ki 5:18 And Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

1Ki 7:10 And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. These huge stones were first set level and then the structure was built upon the stones. The New Jerusalem is built this way. The twelve foundations carry the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This once again shows us that the Lamb’s wife is not entirely futuristic. Hebrews tells us that we have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22). The apostle Paul teaches that we are now fellow citizens of the household of God and “built upon the foundations of the apostles.”

Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Eph 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The church is now framed together and growing unto an holy temple in the Lord! The house is being “framed together,” as a master builder would first frame a structure together. The structure grows into its final destiny. This is the aspect of the church, the Lamb’s wife.
The Stone Cometh

The foundation stones for the city are the twelve apostles. The Lord Jesus told Peter, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat 16:18). Peter was a foundation rock or stone. Obviously the others became the same. It was upon them (their doctrine and teachings--Act 2:42) that the church, the Lamb’s wife, was established.

Rev 21:15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

Rev 21:16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Rev 21:17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

v. v. 15-17 It is extremely interesting to read the various interpretations of this city even by the “church fathers.” One common thread flows. That thread is caution not to remove the spiritual. They each in their own way warn of a literal translation, though they usually interpret literally. Yet they warn against the very interpretation they do.

John Wesley says that the city in verse 14 is “figurative” and concerns the twelve apostles. Then, in verse 15 he begins to discuss the natural measurements. He obviously does this to “show, figuratively, that this city was prepared for a great number of inhabitants.” Wesley says in his commentary works for Revelation 21:14 and 15:

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb — Figuratively showing that the inhabitants of the city had built only on that faith which the apostles once delivered to the saints. 15. And he measured the city, twelve thousand furlongs — Not in circumference, but on each of the four sides. Jerusalem was thirty three furlongs in circumference; Alexandria thirty in length, ten in breadth. Nineveh is reported to have been four hundred furlongs round; Babylon four hundred and eighty. But what inconsiderable villages were all these compared to the new Jerusalem! By this measure is understood the greatness of the city....”

It is at this point that Wesley makes a wonderful statement which I quote:

“In treating of all these things a deep reverence is necessary; and so is a measure of spiritual wisdom; that we may neither understand them too literally and grossly, nor go too far from the natural force of the words. The gold, the pearls, the precious stones, the walls, foundations, gates, are undoubtedly figurative expressions; seeing the city itself is in glory, and the inhabitants of it have spiritual bodies: yet these spiritual bodies are also real bodies, and the city is an abode distinct from its inhabitants, and proportioned to them who take up a finite and a determinate space.” (emphasis added)

It appears that the great John Wesley came to the conclusion that though this is real it must also be interpreted figuratively.

Adam Clarke writes concerning Revelation 21:14-16:

“Each side was equal, consequently the length and breadth were equal; and its height is here said to be equal to its length. It is hard to say how this should be understood. It cannot mean the height of the buildings, nor of the walls, for neither houses nor walls could be twelve thousand furlongs in height; some think this means the distance from the plain country to the place where the city stood. But what need is there of attempting to determine such measures in such a visionary representation? The quadrangular form intimates its perfection and stability, for the square figure was a figure of perfection among the Greeks....”

To interpret this city as literal seems foolish and not at all what John desires to project to his readers. The city is the “the bride, the Lamb's wife” (21:9, 10). This is the church in her glory. John desires to convey the replacement of the old with the new. Old Jerusalem is replaced with New Jerusalem. Old Jerusalem was only a shadow and type of the church who is the New Jerusalem. As the heavy black line on the following map shows, the city, if in the natural began in natural Jerusalem, it would stretch eastward well beyond Kuwait into Afghanistan. To the north it would go above Turkey into Georgia and Asia. To the south it would go into Africa and into the Arabian Sea.

This could not be the area of the kingdom for the entire earth is now redeemed. John is simply showing the glory of the New Jerusalem compared to the Old Jerusalem. The Old has been cast out. The New is beyond description.

---

8 Adam Clark, Clarke’s Commentary The New Testament, Volume 6B, Revelation, page 1207
One more thought. Some attempt to say the walls are 1500 miles high. Why would the city need walls that high, or walls at all? Walled cities were for protection. All evil has been cast into the lake of fire. Why is protection needed? However, to keep it working for their doctrine, they develop a pyramid teaching. The pyramid teaching says its not really square, but rather a pyramid. Wycliffe says:

9 The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Moody Press, 1977, page 1523

That does not seem to be what John says. John writes, the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. Foursquare should indicate a cube, not a pyramid. If it is a pyramid, then what happened to the walls? This does not follow the pattern of the tabernacle nor the temple. They go to all the trouble to prove the walls are 1500 miles high when the scripture clearly says:

REV 21:17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

Remember the city is twelve thousand furlongs or 1500 miles square. Yet the walls are “an hundred and forty and four cubits” or 216 feet high. Again, attempt to get a picture (which is impossible). The city is a 1500 mile cube, right? That means 1500 miles up as well as long. But the walls are only 216 feet. We have a problem. How can the city be 1500 miles up when the walls are only 216 feet up? Plus, the “pyramid” theory is hindered with these walls also.

John is not describing a pyramid, a natural city, or 216 feet high walls. He is showing the Lamb’s
The Stone Cometh

wife as the New Jerusalem in all her glory. The
foursquare structure speaks of the perfect
dwelling of God. The most holy of all dwellings of
the Scriptures were four square both in the
tabernacle (10 cubits x 10 cubits x 10 cubits) and
the temple (2Ch 3:8). Kevin Conner in his fine
work “The Tabernacle of Moses” says:

“The Most Holy Place or Holiest of All measured 10 cubits in
height, length and width. It was a cube and foursquare. It had a
cubicle content of 1000 (10 x 10 x 10). It had but one lone article
of furniture in it, the Ark of the Covenant. The Holiest of All was
the very Throne of God in Israel. He dwelt in their midst in this
foursquare Most Holy Place. Upon the Ark of the Covenant was
the Blood-stained Mercy Seat upon which the very Presence and
Shekinah Glory of the Lord God rested. His Glory filled that
foursquareness and covered the earth floor of the Tabernacle.
The only source of light in the Most Holy Place was this visible Glory of
God…. The Ark of the Covenant speaks of the Throne of God and
the Lamb which is to be with men in the earth (Mat 6:9-10; Jer
3:17; Rev 22:1, 2). . . . The foursquareness speaks of the ultimate
picture seen in the Foursquare City of God, the Holy City,
Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-5).”

It must be remembered that the glory of God will
not only fill a city. It will fill the earth!

Num 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled
with the glory of the LORD.

Psa 72:19 And blessed be his glorious name forever: and let
the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy,
ho ly, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Eze 43:2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came
from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of
many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

John says that the measurements he used were
according to the measure of a man, that is, of
the angel. Does he mean that angelic
measurements are the same as human
measurements? Many commentators do not
comment on this verse (example Wycliffe nor
Matthew Henry). John Wesley interprets it as the
reed given John to measure was the length of the
height of the angel.11 The obvious interpretation is
that John is linking the angelic and humanity. This
is exactly what has been seen throughout the

10 Kevin J. Conner, The Tabernacle of Moses, Bible Press Portland,
Oregon, page 111

11 John Wesley’s Notes On The Whole Bible, The New Testament,
Revelation, page 1001-1002

Revelation, just as the angels at the beginning were
the seven stars in the hand of the Son of man. Then
the seven letters were sent to the seven angels.
Angels were seen as important in the leadership of
the church. Throughout the Revelation angels
sounded trumpets, and poured out vials, as the
messages and the judgments of God came by them.

The measuring rod used to measure the New Jerusalem was provided by the messengers of the
Lord. Angel messengers of the Lord give all the
John’s of the kingdom the ability to calibrate the
things of the church--the New Jerusalem. I give
people measuring rods every week. They should be
able to take what I give them and measure their
lives, doctrine, church, etc. This, of course, is not
to do away with angelic beings. But, neither should
we not see the angelic aspects of God’s ministries
and messengers as they are depicted in the
Revelation as angels.

Rev 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper:
and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

v. 18 If a person were required to draw this city
they would find it impossible. Following are the
reasons. In 21:11 the city is “like a jasper stone,
clear as crystal.” A jasper is a gem that may be red,
yellow, or brown. Yet John says in 21:11 (same
verse) that the city is “clear as crystal.” Here in
verse 18 John says, the wall of it was jasper and
the city that was jasper in 21:11 is now gold, but
the gold is not a gold color, it is like clear glass. Is
John confused? Is he contradicting Himself? No,
not at all. This is because John was not describing
a city. John was describing the Lamb’s wife in her
perfection and glory. John was not describing
“heaven” as the “heaven” taught in today’s
theology. John is describing the church, the
Lamb’s wife. She is like unto precious stones and
precious gems, but she really is not a gem at all.
She is like unto gold, but she is not gold.

Rev 21:19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were
garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first
foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a
chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

Rev 21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the
seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the
tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an
amethyst.

v. v. 19, 20 In 21:14 the foundations were
decorated with the names of the apostles of the
Lamb. The foundations were garnished with all
manner of precious stones. Which one was on the foundations? Was it the names or was it precious stones? It is both. The apostles are precious stones, but according to one of the apostles of the Lamb, we too are precious living stones.

1Pe 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

The word translated as garnished is kosmeo (Greek). It means to “put in order and to decorate.” It is from the Greek word kosmos which is usually translated “world,” but means arrangement. In this city the foundations are “put in order.” The foundations are apostolic and the foundations of society are Godly, built upon the apostles of the Lamb. They are decorated with God’s people making the foundations beautiful to behold. This would be in contrast to what societies are built upon today. The society of the New Jerusalem is heavenly. The teachings by God’s apostles, and God’s people, make the foundation of society true, beautiful, attractive, and strong. It is a foundation that can support the mightiest of all structures—the church!

John is careful to number each foundation and attach a gem stone to it. Probably, John is not interested that we think in terms of gem value. Rather, he wants us to see the magnificent colors of humanity and the value of all the precious stones that are God’s people. All nations, and all colors, are united and attached to the foundation stones. The stones definitely carry all the colors of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet) which causes us to remember God’s covenant with Noah toward humanity and creation. The colors of the foundation of the Heavenly Jerusalem will be more numerous than the colors of the rainbow:

1. Jasper: red, yellow, or brown
2. Sapphire: blue or red
3. Chalcedony: milky grayish
4. Emerald: green or yellowish green
5. Sardonyx: red and white
6. Sardius: red
7. Chrysolite: yellow
8. Beryl: pale white, green, blue, yellow, or pink
9. Topaz: light yellow variety of quartz
10. Chrysoprasus: a greenish quartz
11. Jacinth: deep blue
12. Amethyst: rose-red

It is easy to see the High Priest breastplate (foursquare) which was also adorned with the twelve stones as they were set to minister to all the tribes:

Exo 28:15 And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.

Exo 28:16 Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof.

Exo 28:17 And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row.

Exo 28:18 And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

Exo 28:19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

Exo 28:20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings.

Exo 28:21 And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.

In this society all are priests unto our God. As the apostles went into all the earth, the precious lively stones of God attached to them, forming the foundation of the New and Heavenly Jerusalem, which in fact replaced the Old Jerusalem.

Rev 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

v. 21 Just as John went back and gave more insight to the walls and then to the foundations he now goes back and gives more insight to the twelve gates. In verses 12-14 there are angels positioned at the gates. They also have the “names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel” inscribed upon them (verse 14). Now the gates are not gates at all. They are twelve pearls. Each gate was of one pearl. John does not say that the gates were like a pearl. He says that each one is a pearl.

Again, just drawing the Heavenly city is impossible. In verse 25 we will read that the “gates of it shall not be shut at all by day.” How does one “shut” a pearl? There are not two pearls at each gate to “roll” together. There is only one pearl
The Stone Cometh

which is the gate. The gate is a pearl and there are
twelve of them. Surely it can be seen that this is
not a literal city. This is the Lamb’s wife, the
church, the pearl of great price.

The angels of the kingdom are positioned as a
pearl at the gate. The messengers and ministers of
the Lord are pearls in the kingdom. They send the
message of God’s love and welcome whosoever
will to come, and drink freely of the river and eat
of the tree.

John tells us that the street (singular - one street)
of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent
glass. It would be foolish to have a city of this size,
reaching from Asia to Africa and from the
Mediterranean nearly to India, to have only one
street. Some theologians, who work diligently at
convincing people that this really is a natural city,
argue here that it is not a street. They say this is a
plaza. Wycliffe says,

“The word translated street, plateia, means literally a broad
place; from this word derives our word plaza.”

This is acceptable if the city is one large plaza,
but then what happened to the street? At any rate
John says it is pure gold, but then says, as it were
transparent glass. Again we note that this gold is
not gold. An aspect that makes gold is its gold
color. Color is determined by the minerals that
makes gold really gold.

The one street is again mentioned in 22:2. A far
better understanding of these verses is that the
walkway in this society is transparent. There are no
hidden enemies and hidden dangers. The devil is in
the lake of fire. All wicked and evil people are in
the lake of fire. Everyone who refused to
accomplish good works is in the lake of fire. And
this walk is as precious as gold. The rewards for
righteousness and laboring for the kingdom’s sake
is rewarded beyond measure. John cannot describe
the walk, the street, or the plaza. He just says it is
like gold, no it is like clear glass.

Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God
Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

v. 22 The word naos translated “temple” 43
times in the New Testament (twice “temples” and
once “shrine”) is used in this verse. It speaks of the
innermost part of the temple. The word “temple” is

found 117 times in the King James version. Thus,
if 46 of these 117 are naos, obviously 71 are not.
All the other 71 are the Greek word heiron which
means a sacred place. It was with the heiron the
devil tempted Jesus (Mat 4:5) as he took Jesus to
the “pinnacle of the temple,” or the outside of the
temple. The heiron is the area that the priests
function in (Mat 12:5). This is also the area where
Jesus cast out the money changers and them that
bought and sold (Mat 21:12). The heiron is the
area where teaching was done (Mat 21:14) and the
congregation gathered and praised (Mat 21:15). It
was at the heiron the disciples pointed and gazed
at the outside of the temple questioning Jesus
about the end of the age of Moses (Mat 24:1). The
naos is the inner part of the temple. It is the area
where the “veil” hung (Mat 27:51). This is the
area where incense was burned (Luk 1:9). Once
the different meanings of naos and heiron are
understood the statement Jesus made about
Himself being the temple makes much more of an
impact.

Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this
temple (heiron), and in three days I will raise it up.

Joh 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this
temple (heiron) in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three
days?

Joh 2:21 But he spake of the temple (heiron) of his body.

At this point it must be remembered that the
writer of the gospel of St. John is also the writer of
the Revelation. John is showing us that Revelation
21:22 is the fulfillment of St. John 2:19-21. The
ture naos was built when Jesus Christ was
resurrected. The outer temple (heiron) is never
used in the Revelation, although the word “temple”
is found 16 times. The outer is done away.

There are many thoughts concerning the
exclusion of the outer area and only referencing the
inner court in the Revelation. One of these is there
is no animal sacrifice system such as Moses taught.
However, here in Revelation 21:22 there is no
middle area court either, all is inner court. Not only
is the outer removed. All is removed except the
inner. There is no veil to hide the Lamb or God
Almighty from the people. John said, he saw no
temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty
and the Lamb are the temple of it. God Almighty
and the Lamb fill this city, which is the Lamb’s
wife, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the church.

Of course the day of the New Jerusalem is looked forward to, but, it must also be seen that this day is also present, and growing, to its total fulfillment. Paul wrote about this. Paul clearly taught that the church is now full of God and the temple, (naos) thus the “now” dwelling place of God and the Lamb.

1Co 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple (naos) of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
1Co 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple (naos) ye are.

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple (naos) of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple (naos) of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple (naos) in the Lord:
The apostles and New Testament believers believed that they were the New Jerusalem and believed they could be full of the Spirit of God, thus full of His glory (Heb 12:22-24).

John writing to the angel of the church in Philadelphia (3:7), in the first century, writes that the overcomer can become a part of this temple now. Now it is possible to be full of the Lamb and full of God Almighty. The church is the naos temple.

Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Rev 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

v. 23 The passage does not say there is no sun or moon. It does say that this light, natural light, is not necessary. The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it. This would be an allusion to both the natural tabernacle and the natural temple. John is showing the fulfillment of the light of the lampstands used in both. The outer court (done away with in the Heavenly Jerusalem) required natural light from the sun and moon. Upon entering into the Holy Place a different light was required. This was the light given by the lampstands. Now John shows the final source of light, as the naos area is entered, fulfilled by the Heavenly Jerusalem. The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12). John, in the next verse will begin to speak about the nations coming and walking in the light. It may be necessary to note that “light” in John’s day was associated with fire and not electricity. A great light in John’s day would be a great fire. Jesus was a great light or a great fire. The glory of God then is associated with a great fire. John is relating a tremendous glory fire. It is the smoke and fire associated with the glory cloud. There is no need for the fire of the sun or the reflection of the moon.

The true fire is illuminating the city:

Mat 4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

Mat 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Luk 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Joh 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Again, this is not only futuristic. Jesus is the light today. Also His church, wife, the New Jerusalem, is as a city set on a hill. That light is before men today:

Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Mat 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The wife and church should be as a great fire
today, set upon a hill. The glory of God is to come forth and light the paths of all men in all nations. Because the Heavenly Jerusalem is full of the Lamb and full of God Almighty, the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Rev 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

Rev 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

Rev 21:26 And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.

v. v. 24-26 The absolute goal of the wife and bride of the Lamb is to bring the nations of them which are saved into the light. John went into great detail describing the beauty and glory of the true wife. Babylon, the false wife, fornicated with the nations for her own pleasures. The true wife reveals the true light to the nations. She is a reflection of Him. John continues his allusions to the Old Testament showing the fulfillment of the light. The light is not fulfilled with natural Jerusalem. Rather fulfilled by New Jerusalem, which is above, the Lamb’s wife:

Isa 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Isa 60:4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Isa 60:5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

The goal of the church is not to go to heaven, but to become heaven. The goal of the church is not to go live with God, but that God inhabit the church. The goal of the church is not to go live in a mansion, but rather dwell in the throne of God with the Lamb. The gates (precious pearls) are not to be shut at all. All nations are to come and find the pearl of great price (Mat 13:46). Is this only futuristic? Of course not. The wife is “the building fitly framed together,” which now “growth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:21). She should today be the light shining into every nation giving light to save and to walk. She is bringing the glory and honor of the nations into it, because she is the glory.

Rev 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that deflieth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

v. 27 Both the present and the futuristic aspects of this verse are seen. Futurist is seen by “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (20:15). There would be no need to mention them except that John desires we see both the future and the present. The truth is that though things that deflieth, worketh abomination, or maketh a lie can, and do, enter into the outer court temple today they actually do not enter the Heavenly Jerusalem. Paul told the first century believers that they were the naos temple of God, but also warned them of deceiving ministries attempting to enter their structures.

2Co 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

2Co 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

2Co 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

As seen in 20:11-15, their works are recorded and when works are not found these are cast into the lake of fire with the devil, sea beast, and land beast. The pure New Jerusalem is reserved for them which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Contemporary Theological View(s)

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Dispensationalists believe that God will destroy this present earth and replace it with a new one. It seems the primary reason it will be replaced is so we can have a “New Jerusalem.” John Hagee says:

“...God will destroy this present world..... What a glorious picture! Jerusalem, which has endured so much suffering, will be magnificently redeemed! The Bible tells us that by faith Abraham looked forward to the New Jerusalem of eternity, "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:10). Many of the Old Testament saints longed for the New Jerusalem, ‘therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them’ (Heb 11:16).”

13 John Hagee, Beginning of the End, page 184, 185
I am forever amazed at the interpretation methods of the Dispensationalists. Yes, that is what Hebrews 11:16 says, but the writer of Hebrews goes on to identify and explain that Jerusalem:

Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

The New Jerusalem is the church (v. 23). The passage begins with “ye are come....” We are already there if, we are in Jesus and have been sprinkled by His blood.

Rice is a little different with his interpretation. He says the earth will not be really new. Everything on the surface will have been burnt and then God will replace it all with new. He relates it to the flood using 2 Peter 3:7.

“The material of the planet did not disappear, but all the surface of it was so changed as to take away every trace of the civilization and life on earth before the flood. So, again there will come a time when this world will be burnt over with fire and everything fire can destroy will be destroyed. All the present civilization, the marks of mankind’s use and misuse of this earth, will be gone. God will make it into a new earth.”

Rice goes on speaking of the “fervent heat” of 2 Peter 3:12. He says:

“What an amazing thing that a fire will cause even the planets and the heavens to be dissolved when ‘the elements shall melt with fervent heat’!”

Rice recognizes the magnitude of a literal fire such as Peter speaks. But gives no explanation of how that fire could be so intense upon earth to melt the planets, yet leave the earth only purified. These people live in a fairy tale theology.

Peter is speaking of “the day of the Lord,” which came upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The entire city and temple was burned with “fervent heat.” The “earth” Peter speaks of in 2 Peter 3:10 is ge in the Greek. It means “soil, region, land” and is used to speak of the land of Judah.

Rev 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

It was interesting to me that suddenly Swaggart notes that these angels are not angels “as we think.” Swaggart says:

“These angels mentioned in verse nine, are redeemed men. They are not angels as we think of angels, because one of them tells John that he is a prophet (Rev 1:1; 19:10; 22:8, 9).”

Dispensationalists teach that this city is actually a giant satellite created by God that comes from outer space. Really, they do! Phillips writes:

“The city is closely linked with the bride. Babylon was set forth in a dual way as a woman and a city; so is the holy Jerusalem. The city and its inhabitants are thus closely linked.

“Twice the city is said to descend from heaven. The first time, in verse three, has to do with the eternal state. In that verse the city is seen descending toward the new earth, there to remain forever. Here in verse nine, the city descends to earth’s environs to hover over the earth throughout the Millennium.

“There is nothing impossible about a giant literal city hovering in the sky over the earth and located immediately over the earthly city of Jerusalem. Men have scoffed at such an idea in the past, but they can afford to scoff no more. Men themselves can now put satellites into stationary orbit over any part of the globe. The New Jerusalem is brought by God from outer space and made to hover in stationary orbit over Jerusalem. Direct communication is opened up between heaven and earth, and there will be much intercourse between the two Jerusalem’s. The miraculous element is present, but it is no longer the kind of thing at which men can scoff, nor is it to be regarded as science fiction.

“....The God who can orbit a moon around a planet or a family of planets around a sun can easily design a cubical satellite, create it, and then launch it into its desired orbit relative to earth.”

See, I told you they taught that. It is interesting to me that Phillips said, “The city is closely linked with the bride.” I don’t think that is what the passage says or shows. The passage says the city was the bride that the angel showed John. At any rate the Lamb’s wife is not a satellite from outer space. The Lamb’s wife is the church purchased by His blood.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be

---

14 John R. Rice, Behold He Cometh, page 309-310

15 Jimmy Swaggart, The Prophecies and Symbols of Revelation, page 181

16 John Phillips, Exploring Revelation, page 251-253
The Stone Cometh

holy and without blemish.

Eph 5:32. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Gary Cohen has an interesting thought (as usual). He has decided that the New Jerusalem is the place that God will protect the raptured believers as the “fervent heat” of 2 Peter burns the earth and melts the planets. Cohen says,

“The believers are preserved in the Holy City, and after the earth is burned and re-newed the believers descend safely in the Holy City. The physics of this we are not told. Yet we are told the wonderful results—the New Jerusalem descends in glory as a bride. She is the bride of Christ by virtue of her housing His people whom He loves and for whom He died.”

According to their doctrine the New Jerusalem is the place that Jesus went to prepare for His disciples (Joh 14:3). After two or three thousand years it will finally be ready. Dispensationalists interpret everything in the city as literal. I suppose that is why it has taken the Lord so long to finish building it. The foundations are literal, the jewels are literal, the pearls are literal, the street(s) literal, the tree(s) literal, the river(s) literal, etc. What this means is the Lamb’s wife will be a literal satellite city that came from outer space and will hover directly over natural Jerusalem on the earth.

Rev 21:21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Rev 22:1. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Rev 22:2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Twice the scriptures tell us there is a “street” of gold, not “streets” of gold. There is one river and one tree. We have all heard about the “streets (plural) of gold.” You will be interested also to discover that there will also be trees (plural) and rivers (plural) according to their doctrine. Dake says,

“The Greek word plateia means ‘a broadway or street.’ The singular number here does not indicate that there is only one street in the city any more than it does in Rev. 11:8. The same word is translated ‘streets’ in Mat. 6:5; 12:19; Luke 10:10; 13:26; and the street in the city any more than it does in Rev. 11:8. The same singular number here does not indicate that there is only one tree. We have all heard about the “streets of gold.” There is one river and one tree. We have all heard about the “streets of gold.”

If one will take the time to look up Dake’s references (prior) they will see that King James does translate it as “streets.” However what it really means is street or broadway just as the Greek word plateia means.

4113 plateia (plat-i'-ah) from 4116

Which of the many streets does the river flow through and has the tree? If we have many streets then where is the tree and the river located? We have a problem. Rather than determine the location, the Dispensationalists ingeniously create many “trees” and many “rivers.” They must because the street has a tree and a river. We have another problem. The river only flows from the throne. Can we add many thrones? No, we can’t do that. What do we do? We create a mountain for the throne to sit upon because the river proceeds from the throne and flows downhill. Then we add tributaries or little rivers to flow down each golden street. Then we add a tree to each street and river. Walla! We have created the dispensational doctrine. Dake says,

“There will be an abundance of water in the city, twelve rivers, as proved in point 14 below, and living fountains of waters. These waters are as clear as crystal and are called living rivers and living fountains. If the city is to be like a mountain peak with the thrones at the top, the rivers will have a gradual flow for fifteen hundred miles from the top to the base of the city, where they will flow on down into some part of the earth.

“This passage seems to teach that in the middle of each of the twelve streets and on either side of the rivers there are trees of life. From a picture of this one street we conclude that in every one of the twelve great broadways leading from the throne to the twelve great gates at the base of the city there will be a river of living water flowing down the middle of it, with trees of life on each side. This is entirely consistent with the greatness of the city. Could it be that there will be only one street, one river, and one tree of life on only one side of the city, running through only one of the gates, with no streets, rivers, or trees of life on the other three sides or to the other gates?”

Dispensationalists justify their interpretation and addition of trees and rivers by saying that John is

18 Rev. Finis Jennings Dake, Revelation Expounded, Tenth Printing
July 1991, page 315

19 Rev. Finis Jennings Dake, Revelation Expounded, Tenth Printing
July 1991, page 317
not giving us a detailed description of the city.

“It must be kept in mind that John is not giving us a detailed description of everything in the city, but just sufficient details to give us an understanding of the city and to show the greatness and beauty of it. The same language concerning the ‘street’ (singular) is used concerning the ‘river.’ If there are twelve streets, then it is possible that there are twelve rivers...”

Dispensationalists criticize those who use allegories (Gal 4:24) to interpret scriptures. They call us heretics. Yet they can add and justify doing anything to make their doctrine work by saying, “John is not giving us a detailed description of everything...” Beware of the leaven of Pharisees and Sadducees.

20 Rev. Finis Jennings Dake, Revelation Expounded, Tenth Printing
July 1991, page 318