

The Beauty of God as Seen in the New Jerusalem

(Rev. 21:1 – 22:5)

A. Introduction

1. Revelation 21:1 – 22:5 is the ultimate climax of the entire redemptive plan of God.
 - a. It gives us a glimpse of our eternal dwelling place as the people of God — the New Jerusalem.
 - b. It gives us a glimpse of our eternal inheritance that will be given to the people of God at Jesus' Second Coming.
 - c. It gives us a glimpse of our eternal destiny — to live in a face-to-face relationship with God in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth as we rule God's vast empire.
2. It is important for us to have revelation of this truth and to teach this truth to the Body of Christ (Rev. 21:5).
 - a. It will give us a biblical understanding of God's ultimate redemptive plan.
 - b. It will inspire us to live with an eternal perspective. Old Testament saints have an insight of this truth and Paul exhorted the people of God to live with an eternal perspective (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16–18; Heb. 11:8–10, 13–16, 32–40).

B. Overview of Revelation 21:1 – 22:5

1. Revelation 21:1 – 22:5 gives us two views of the New Jerusalem:
 - a. Revelation 21:1–8 gives us descriptions of the City on the New Earth during Eternity. It is given in relational terms or in nearness to God.
 - i. It gives us a picture of our eternal dwelling place – the foundational reality is of God dwelling with His people on earth. (v3, 6)
 - ii. It describes the eternal state of the resurrected saints in the City in a face-to-face relationship with God. It describes the quality of the spiritual life of the saints after the Second Coming.
 - iii. This is in the chronological progression of the book of Revelation that happens immediately after the Great White Throne events in Revelation 20:1–15.
 - b. Revelation 21:9 – 22:5 gives us descriptions of the splendour of the New Jerusalem. It is seen from two points of view: the external view (Rev. 21:9–22) and the internal view (Rev. 21:23 – 22:5).
 - i. The New Jerusalem, seen in Revelation 21:9 – 22:5, elaborates on Revelation 21:1–8 to give details of the City in which the saints will live forever. The eternal

state of the resurrected will enjoy their eternal inheritance in a face-to-face relationship with God. The point here is that the Great Tribulation saints enter their full inheritance at the Second Coming in the New Jerusalem.

- ii. Revelation 21:9 – 22:5 is a parenthetical section like Revelation 17:1 – 19:10. It is not meant to be understood as events that unfold in chronological sequence after the New Earth is created (Rev. 21:1–2).
- iii. Revelation 21:9 – 22:5 refers to the Millennium because the nature of things mentioned is out of character with the eternal state.
- iv. The angel took John to a mountain to show him the Bride in Revelation 21:9–10. This is intended to parallel the angel taking John to the wilderness to show him the Great Harlot in Revelation 17:1–3. The contrast of the Harlot and the Bride is a major theme in Revelation.
- v. Revelation 21:9–22 describes the eternal and temporal together. The eternal state of the resurrected saints in the New Jerusalem is pictured during the Millennium in this passage. The occupants of this City are described in their eternal state, possessing eternal inheritance, in eternal relationship with God living with them. No change is in their relationship during the Millennium.

C. Outline of Revelation 21:1 – 22:5

1. Rev. 21:1–2: Introducing the Eternal City — the ultimate dwelling place and inheritance of the saints.
2. Rev. 21:3–4: The ultimate eternal plan of God.
3. Rev. 21:5–8: Seven-fold message of the Father.
4. Rev. 21:9–10: The revelation of the Bride – the New Jerusalem.
5. Rev. 21:11–21: The external view of the New Jerusalem — the ultimate Holy of Holies.
 - v11: Glory of the City.
 - v12–15: Design of the City.
 - v16–17: Size of the City.
 - v18–21: Beauty of the City.
6. Rev 21:22 – 22:5: The internal view of New Jerusalem — the ultimate Garden of Eden.
 - a. Rev. 21:22–27: Beauty of the City in relation to interaction between the Millennial Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem.
 - v22: Worshipping City with no Temple.
 - v23: Glorious City with no sun.

v24, 26: Governing City with God's Throne.

v25: Safe City with no gate.

v25: Working City that serves God.

v27: Holy City with no sin.

b. Rev. 22:1–5: Picture of the life within the City.

v1–2: River of life.

v2: Trees of life.

v3: Throne of God.

v4: Face-to-face communion with God.

v5: Eternal partnership with God.

D. The New Jerusalem: the Eternal Dwelling Place of the Saints (Rev. 21:1–8)

1. John gives us the description of the City in terms of nearness to God. It will be our eternal inheritance to live in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth.
 - a. The New Jerusalem is the place where saints are taken to at the rapture to live with God forever and where we will have a face-to-face communion with the Father.
 - b. It can be viewed as the Father's gift and Jesus' diamond City (i.e. wedding gift) for His Bride. The adorning of a bride refers to that which spares no detail or extravagance in beauty preparations.
2. John also gives us the picture of the City as our eternal dwelling place. The New Jerusalem is the place where the saints will live with God forever.
3. *I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.* (Rev. 21:1)
 - a. John saw the passing away of the first heaven and the first earth. Out of it came the new heaven and the new earth.
 - i. Theologians debate whether this present earth will be renovated (i.e. renewed) or annihilated after the Millennium. The Scripture is clear that it will be renovated.
 - ii. The words "*passed away*" are the same used in 2 Corinthians 5:17. This earth will continue forever. God put all the ingredients in the earth that are necessary to multiply its resources forever (Ps. 37:29; 78:69; 104:5; 105:10–11; 125:1–2; 1 Chron. 23:25; 28:8; Isa. 60:21; Ezek. 37:25; Joel 3:20).

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- b. The new heaven and the new earth are mentioned four times in the Bible. It is the ultimate fulfilment of the promise of God to Israel (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).
 - c. The New Jerusalem rests forever on the New Earth. The New Earth is “created” so that New Jerusalem could rest on the earth forever.
 - d. No more sea — The original earth was created with rivers, but no sea. The new earth will be restored to its original state, where there will literally be no sea. The sea is also a symbol of fear and uncertainty in ancient days.
4. *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2).*
- a. John saw the ultimate descent of the New Jerusalem to the New Earth. The City is given four names that reveal four different aspects of the New Jerusalem.
 - i. Holy City (Rev. 21:2) — The City is set apart for God and is totally unique from other cities in the world. The city will be like God.
 - ii. New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) — The City is the ultimate fulfilment of all the promises of God for Israel. It also speaks of the continuity of His eternal plan.
 - iii. Lamb’s wife (Rev. 21:9) — The City is called the Bride, and the City is the Bride. It speaks of partnership with Jesus who is our eternal Bridegroom.
 - iv. Great City (Rev. 21:10) — No City in history will be greater and more glorious than this City.
 - b. The City is the Father’s gift and Jesus’ diamond City (i.e. wedding gift) for His Bride. The adorning of a bride refers to that which spares no detail or extravagance in beauty preparations. The Father will extravagantly and lavishly prepare the City as a wedding gift for Jesus and His Bride.
5. *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain..." (Rev. 21:3–4)*
- a. Revelation 21:3–4 is the ultimate redemptive plan of God and the ultimate expression of the Kingdom of God. This is the highest point of all salvation history where the Father dwells on earth with humans (Matt. 6:10; Gen. 17:7; Ex. 6:7; 2 Cor. 6:16).
 - b. God’s purpose has always been to live together with His people face-to-face on this earth. This is the most difficult yet ultimate reality that God determined to accomplish through Christ. The dilemma is that God cannot violate His blazing holiness and yet will not violate man’s free will.
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- c. Thus, He had to establish a salvation process that created the context for Him to dwell face-to-face with humans. God can only make His habitation on earth after the nations live in obedience to Him. There are many implications to this grand reality of God fully removing “the veil”.
- d. John highlighted 10 declarations by the Spirit in Revelation 21:3–4 (five in Rev. 21:3 and another five in Rev. 21:4).

Declaration 1: “*The tabernacle of God is with men*” — This declares a new order of life. The Father’s ultimate plan for the human race was to establish His throne on the earth forever.

Declaration 2: “*He will dwell with them*” — His people will permanently experience His manifest Presence in a way that tenderises and energises them in love and righteousness.

Declaration 3: “*They shall be His people*” — He will openly and continually manifest His abundant provision and direction for them.

Declaration 4: “*God will be with them*” — His people enjoy a deep interaction, partnership, and relationship with Him. He will walk with them as He walked with Adam in Eden (Gen. 3:8).

Declaration 5: “*He shall be their God*” — His people will trust, worship, and obey Him.

Declaration 6: “*He will wipe away every tear*” — God’s tender care is communicated to each person.

Declaration 7: “*There will be no more death*” — no more death for people.

Declaration 8: “*There will be no more sorrow*” — no shame, no sting of past trauma or failure.

Declaration 9: “*There will be no more crying*” — no rejection, regret, or sense of loss.

Declaration 10: “*There will be no more pain*” — no injury either physically or emotionally.

- 6. Seven negatives on this earth will be removed forever on the New Earth: no sea (Rev. 21:1), death, sorrow, crying, pain (Rev. 21:4), curse (Rev. 22:3), nor night (Rev. 21:25; 22:5). All that diminished our life will be totally and eternally reversed.

7. Revelation 21:5–8 is the revelation of the Father's majesty, generosity and severity. In this seven-fold message, we see the Father's role, responsibility and commitments to us. The Father speaks in a direct way for the second time in Revelation (Rev. 1:8; 21:5).
- a. *I make all things new* (v5) — The promise of ultimate glorification where we will be given the new body, new heart, new mind and new earth.
 - b. *Write* (v5) — It is a vital message for the people of God to know and also for the End-Time forerunners to proclaim.
 - c. *It is done* (v6) — The ultimate assurance of the Father that all His plans will come to pass with certainty.
 - d. *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End* (v6) — Alpha and Omega describes the Father as a leader with absolute completeness in power, wisdom and love. All His plans will come to pass. The Father is saying, "*Be assured that all My plans will come to pass because I am the Alpha and Omega*".
 - e. The Father gives a three-fold promise to overcomers in Revelation 21:6–8.
 - i. *Fountain of water of life* (v6) — the ultimate experience of abundant life (Jn. 10:10; Isa. 55:1).
 - ii. *Overcomers shall inherit all things* (v7) — overcomers shall receive of the ultimate inheritance and abundant blessings from the Father.
 - iii. Seven categories of the wicked that will face eternal punishments: cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and liars (v8).

E. Description of the City as the Holy of Holies and the Garden of Eden (Rev. 21:9 – 22:5)

1. The New Jerusalem will function as the ultimate Holy of Holies (i.e. external view) and the ultimate Garden of Eden (i.e. internal view). John elaborates on 21:1 – 8 by giving us details of the City. It is seen as the prophetic fulfilment of two places in which God dwelt with His people throughout history.
 - a. In Genesis 1 – 2, God dwelt with Adam and Eve openly in the Garden of Eden, and the ultimate restoration of the Garden of Eden is in Revelation 22:1–5.
 - b. The Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon are foreshadows of the Holy of Holies in Revelation 21:9–22.
2. The two revelations of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 – 22 will inspire two responses:
 - a. The Holy of Holies reveals the beauty of the New Jerusalem that will cause us to be awestruck, resulting in worship the Father.

- b. The Garden of Eden reveals the pleasure and life in New Jerusalem that inspire Bridal love for Jesus.

3. Description of the City as the Holy of Holies: The external view (Rev. 21:9–22)

- a. *One of the seven angels who had the seven bowl... "I will show you the bride..."* (v9)

- i. John sees the City from a high mountain from two views: from an external view as the ultimate Holy of Holies (Rev. 21:9–22) and the internal view as the ultimate garden of Eden (Rev. 22:1–5).
- ii. The “*same*” angel showed John the Bride in Revelation 21:9 and the Harlot Babylon in Revelation 17:1–3. They are parallel visions that are both clearly parenthetical sections in which an angel explains significant details and events that do not occur on earth in chronological order.
- iii. Why did God use the same angel who released judgement to reveal the bride? Because the judgement of God and the glory of God are two sides of His perfect will for the earth. The LORD wants us to know the perfect and dynamic correlation between both, and it does not contradict each other.
- iv. The judgement of God releases the glory and purposes of God. God’s judgement removes everything that hinders love. The destruction of Harlot gives rise to the Bride and the destruction of Babylon City gives rise to New Jerusalem.

- b. *I will show you the bride...* (v9)

The City is called the Bride which refers to the people and the City in relationship together. It is the highest and final title of the Holy City and the most intimate and sacred title for New Jerusalem.

- c. *He...showed me the...holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...* (Rev. 21:10)

- i. The New Jerusalem will descend to the earth in two stages. First, it will descend at the Second Coming to begin the Millennium (Rev. 21:10). Second, after the Millennial earth is cleansed with fire to become the New Earth that has no sea will occur in the Age-to-come (Rev. 21:2).
- ii. By understanding the structure of Revelation 21 – 22 we see the two descents of the New Jerusalem. We know that the events in Revelation 21:9 – 22:5 refer to the Millennium because the nature of what is described includes the eternal and temporal realms being together. In other words, we see the eternal state of the resurrected saints in the New Jerusalem along with Millennial conditions.

- d. *Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.* (Rev. 21:11)

The City’s glory is seen as Jesus’ Bride that is filled with the Shekinah glory as prophetically seen in Solomon’s Temple (2 Chron. 5 – 7). The jasper light is the

Shekinah glory of God (Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5). God's Throne was prophetically seen in the Ark of the Covenant (Rev. 22:3–4).

- e. Revelation 21:12–22 describes the design, beauty, structure and size of the New Jerusalem.
 - i. The structure of the City is described like the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon (1 King. 6:19–20).
 - ii. The design and materials of the City are described with the same precious stones that the high priest wore on their breastplate. Jewels of the high priest are a picture of his nearness to God (Ex. 28:17–20; 39:10).
- f. *The City is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth.* (v16)
The City's design: the City is described as a cube, like the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple, in which the inner sanctuary was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high (1 King. 6:19–20).
- g. *She had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates...three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west...The City is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. He measured the City...12,000 furlongs (1,380 miles). Its length, breadth (width), and height are equal (cube). He measured its wall: 144 cubits (216 feet thick)...The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the City was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall...were adorned with all kinds of precious stones...The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each gate was of one pearl. The street of the City was pure gold, like transparent glass* (Rev. 21:12–21).

The City's construction: gates (Rev. 21:12b–14), walls (Rev. 21:12a, 14–18), foundations (Rev. 21:12, 19–20) and street (Rev. 21:21; 22:2). The gates are about every 500 miles if they are evenly separated over 1380 miles.

- i. Great and high walls — Symbol of protection and comfort.
- ii. Great — The New Jerusalem is great in architecture feat and visually beautiful.
- iii. 12,000 furlongs — The City is 1380 miles high and wide.
- iv. With twelve gates — Represent the twelve tribes of Israel which is a statement of God's faithfulness to the covenant that He has made with Israel.
- v. Twelve foundations...names of the twelve apostles — The foundation of the City were the names of the twelve apostles which is a statement of God's faithfulness to the continuity of the New Covenant.
- vi. Gates — Each gate is about 400 miles apart.

vii. A gold reed measuring the City — A symbol of the permanence of the New Jerusalem in accordance to the plan of God.

- h. *He who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the City, its gates, and its wall. The City is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the City with the reed: 12,000 furlongs (1,380 miles). Its length, breadth (width), and height are equal (cube). He measured its wall: 144 cubits (216 feet thick)... (Rev. 21:15–17)*

The City's size: the walls of the New Jerusalem are 1,380 miles (7,286,400 ft.) in length, height, and width (Rev. 21:12b–14). A furlong (NIV stadia) is a Greek measurement that is approximately 600 feet (200 yards or 1/8 of a mile). The walls are 216 feet or 72 yards thick (Rev. 21:15–17).

- i. *Adorned with all kinds of precious stone... jasper... sapphire... chalcedony... emerald... sardonyx... sardius... chrysolite... beryl... topaz... chrysoprase... jacinth... amethyst_ (Rev. 21:19–20)*

The City's beauty: It has twelve of the precious stones that the high priest wore on his breastplate when entering the Holy of Holies, signifying nearness to God (Ex. 28:17–20; 39:10).

4. Description of the City as the Garden of Eden: The internal view (Rev. 21:22 – 22:5)

- a. *I saw no temple in it... (Rev. 21:22)*

A worshipping City without a temple: Worship is the focal point of the City. There is no temple because sin does not exist in the eternal Garden of Eden.

- b. *The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. The nations...shall walk in its light... (Rev. 21:23–24)*

An Illuminated City with no sun: John is describing the beautiful light source of the City – from the Father's glory and Jesus the Light of the world.

- c. *The (Millennial) nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the (Millennial) earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Rev. 21:24–27)*

- i. Revelation 21:22–27 describes some of the interaction between the Millennial kings and the New Jerusalem. It also reveals the eternal state of the resurrected saints in the New Jerusalem. There will be no change in their relationship in the City during or after the Millennium.

- ii. Revelation 21:25–26 describes a safe City with no gates. There is no more threat or danger in the Eternal City.

iii. Revelation 21:27 is a picture of a Holy City with no sin.

5. *And he showed me a pure river of water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:1–2)*

Life in the City: This is the ultimate picture of eternal life that Jesus has promised in John 10:10. The river of Life (Rev. 22:1) and the tree of Life (Rev. 22:2) point to Eden. John saw a pure river of water of Life, clear as crystal, and a tree of Life with twelve kinds of fruit. Leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2). There shall be no curse (Rev. 22:3).

6. *And there shall be no more curse, but the Throne God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. (Rev. 22:3–5)*

The saints shall serve God in a face-to-face relationship filled with holiness. God's light will impart power, wisdom, and holiness to those ruling with Him. The saints will not be idle but will be administering His government with authority over a billion galaxies.